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CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

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Die 20a Aprilis, 1936.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL ACTION

PRINCIPLES, PURPOSE AND PRACTICE

BY

A. M. CROFTS, O.P.

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

RIGHT REV. MGR. WM. DEAN BYRNE, D.D., P.P., V.G.

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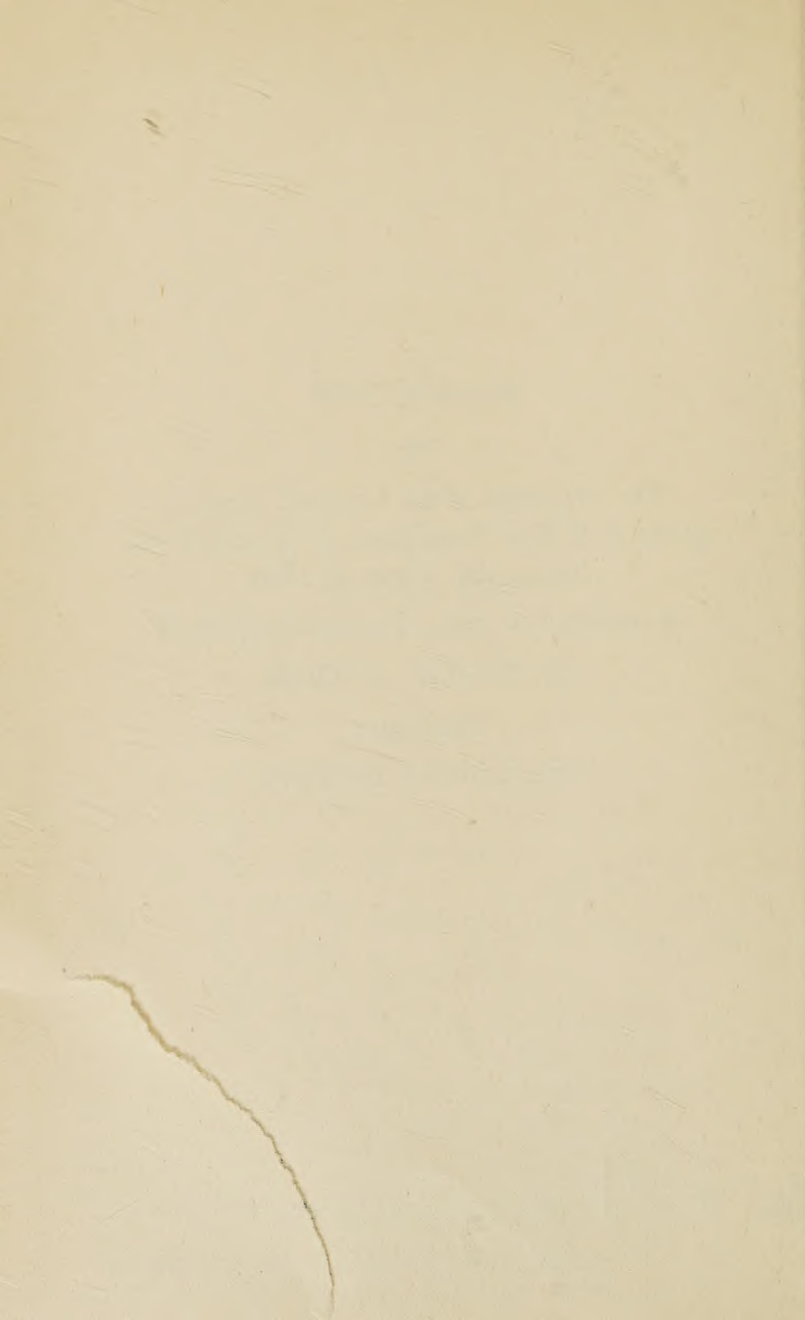
CATHOLIC ACTION

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FOREWORD

WITHIN the last ten years or so there have been remarkable developments in English-speaking countries in the matter of Catholic organization. Movements of various kinds under the inspiration of the Papal Encyclicals have been originated. In Maynooth, the Alma Mater of Ireland's Secular Priesthood, a Chair of Catholic Action has been instituted to meet the new needs. In the Press reports of Catholic meetings, of lectures and sermons, show how important the question has become. Catholic Circles have definitely become what may be termed Catholic Action conscious.

There is always danger when a word or name becomes too popular. Glib use may make it hackneyed. "Catholic Action" is no exception. The ease and self-assurance with which it is used make one at times somewhat dubious whether its real meaning is understood. It would certainly be a great pity, now that definite movements on its behalf are in course of formation, were the nature, dignity, purpose and conditions of this modern apostolate not thoroughly appreciated. To help

towards a complete understanding is the modest purpose of these pages. Should even a little assistance be given to those who are at present labouring to ensure authentic beginnings amongst our Catholic People the author will be amply rewarded.

There must necessarily be but one main source of information in a book on Catholic Action. The call has come from the Supreme Pontiffs. To them also must pertain the sole right of determining what this action is to be. Encyclicals, authoritative declarations of the Holy Fathers, decisions of Congregations as well as Episcopal pronouncements form consequently the basis of all teaching on the apostolate of the laity. As regards Papal pronouncements and official declarations of the Holy See, the "*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*" is the recognized source of information. Advantage has been taken of various translations that have appeared of Papal letters and Encyclicals, chiefly through the Catholic Truth Society of England. For other quotations the "*Acta*" corresponding to the date of the pronouncement may be consulted.

Papal documents referring or entirely devoted to Catholic Action date from the Pontificate of Pope Pius IX. As time went on this modern apostolate became more and more precisely described by successive Holy Fathers. These declarations alone provide a wide field of research. This book is meant to provide at once a synthesis

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whereby different authoritative statements are grouped under separate headings so as to present a complete treatment and an analysis purporting to set down the general principles governing Catholic Action. This two-fold task presents no small difficulty. A certain amount of repetition is unavoidable in order to achieve clarity throughout the different parts. Such repetition, where it occurs, will be found to pertain to most essential considerations. As such it will not be useless.

The scope of this book is narrowed down to the consideration of the social aspect of Catholic Action. It deals mainly with activity on behalf of social reconstruction on Christian lines. That is not the whole of Catholic Action. Purely spiritual works, such as prayer, fasting and alms deeds, pertain also to the general scheme of the modern apostolate. The re-establishment of the Christian Family life is likewise one of its declared purposes. "No activity," declares the present Holy Father, "in so far as it is useful for the promotion of the Christian life, may be excluded from its programme" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira, January, 1934). Yet the social question being most urgent has become the chief rallying ground of the Catholic Apostolate. It is the main preoccupation of the Papal Encyclicals on Catholic Action. It has given a definite scientific development to Catholic activity. Whilst not neglecting the other aspects of Catholic Action, it is

with the particular view of clearly defining the social apostolate that this book has been written.

Though the Social Question assumes a very important place in the following pages, yet the reader must not expect to find in them a complete treatise on Catholic social reform. Such a treatise is the business of Catholic Ethics and Sociology. The essential consideration in a book on Catholic Social Action must be the different aspects of the activity whereby Catholics endeavour to apply to social life, through the recognized methods of the Lay Apostolate, the principles of Christian Ethics. Many chapters will treat of the fundamentals of Christian social life, but with a view to determining more exactly the nature, purpose and methods of the action on their behalf.

A final word concerning the order of chapters may help the reader to appreciate more easily the scientific basis of this modern apostolate. From the general we descend to the particular. The opening considerations are concerned with the Church and the nature of membership, which is the source of all lay activity and determines the essential nature of Catholic Action (Part I). In the following section the new and urgent necessity of this Apostolate is considered (Part II). Then comes the purpose of Catholic Action : what precisely it seeks to restore in a world that has denied not alone the Supernatural life of Grace, but the very rights of God

FOREWORD

which reason itself dictates. Only when such rights are secure can the social purpose of Catholic Action be completely understood (Part III). Having seen the nature as well as the purpose of the apostolate itself, attention must be given to certain more particular determining factors. The lay man must be prepared both spiritually and intellectually (Part IV), and his activity must be above reproach by reason of his allegiance to authority and independence of all party bias (Part V). Since Catholic Action, though personal in its demands, entails organization for its complete accomplishment, a section is added on the nature and means of Catholic association (Part VI). Next come a number of chapters dealing with the chief means of propaganda for Christian ideals (Part VII).

INTRODUCTION

By Right Rev. Mgr. WILLIAM DEAN BYRNE, D.D.,
P.P., V.G.

IN the following pages Fr. Crofts makes a valuable contribution to the educative work which is essential to the preparatory and early stages of Catholic Action. It is clearly of the first importance that, from the beginning, the nature of Catholic Action be rightly understood, that its sphere of operation be properly defined, and that its exalted character, as an integral part of the Christian Apostolate, be brought into the clearest relief and given the utmost prominence. Nothing is more characteristic of the various appeals in which our present Holy Father, the Pope, has sent the call to Catholic Action resounding throughout Christendom than the special, even meticulous, care with which he has expounded its character, aims, methods and sphere of operation, and the no less clearly framed inhibitions which he has issued in reference to the departments of human activity where it has no concern, at least of a direct or immediate character. Fr. Crofts shows himself

a true disciple of His Holiness. He has recourse throughout to the primary and authoritative sources—especially the writings of the present Pope and Popes Leo XIII and Pius X—and his methodical and scientific presentation of the subject, especially of the bearing and influence of Catholic Action in the social sphere, will be found by our Catholic students of Sociology—happily a constantly growing number—to be of the greatest helpfulness and value.

It is sometimes said that we have no great need for Catholic Action in Ireland. We are happily free, it is stated, from the appalling evils which in so many countries abroad disgrace public life and belie the Christian name. It is true indeed that our circumstances and needs differ very much from those of other countries, and that our position is, in certain paramount respects, an advantageous and enviable one. There is no parallel elsewhere to our crowded churches, nor to the manner in which their atmosphere is charged with religious fervour. The Christian Faith has its rightful place—that is, the *first* place—in the minds and lives of our people, and the standard of moral observance generally prevailing ranks undoubtedly high ; but, while this is true and while it can be conceded that the need of Catholic Action arising from existing evils is not at all comparable to that which prevails in other countries, yet we cannot allow that the vigorous life of our people and their comparative immunity

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from the more modern forms of social evil can afford any ground for the curtailing of Catholic Action or give any excuse for slackness in responding to the great call of our Holy Father, the Pope. On the contrary, the glorious inheritance which is ours of an intense Catholic life is all the greater reason for putting forth Catholic Action on a grander scale and with a more assured hope of abundant fruitfulness.

But there is a further reason which forbids any airy dismissal of the need of Catholic Action among us. It does not at all follow that a regular and even fervent discharge of religious duties has commensurate or proportionate results in ordinary life. Such results should indeed be the co-natural effect of religious exercises and of recourse to the means of grace, and such results would undoubtedly follow if due co-operation on our part with grace were always forthcoming. But, owing to human weakness and inconstancy, and through the operation, in their modern guise, of those causes of failure described with such penetrating analysis in the Parable of the Sower, the sad but undeniable fact is that, in the case of far too many, due co-operation with grace is extensively lacking, large tracts of life are subjected to other than Christian motives, the "true life" is very inadequately lived, and one looks in vain for the existence of the fully developed Christian mind. Similarly in public life, apart from

directly religious functions and celebrations, the beneficent influence of the Church, the light and life which belong to the Mystical Body of Christ are too frequently impeded in their effects by interests and movements which too deeply and disproportionately take possession of the public mind and exercise an excessive and sometimes an illegitimate sway. It is in this field of the ordinary life, in the big spaces between attendances in Church, in the multiple extensive and varied activities of individual, family, social and public life, that Catholic Action in Ireland has extensive and necessary work to do. This is made abundantly clear in Fr. Croft's book. The evils to be encountered and the needs to be supplied are impressively set forth, and the lines on which Catholic Action is to proceed are luminously traced.

To provide remedial measures for existing evils, however noble and praiseworthy their endeavours may be, is far from exhausting the aims and scope of Catholic Action. Indeed, the destruction of evil, the repressing of concupiscence, the removal of social injustices, have as their chiefest merit the removal of impediments to the extension of the Kingdom of God and to the flow of divine life into the souls of men. In his Encyclical of June, 1931, our Holy Father refers to the twofold right of the laity: first, "the right of souls to procure for themselves the greatest spiritual good according to the teaching and under the formative work of the

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Church ” ; and secondly, “ the right of the souls so formed to share the treasures of the Redemption with other souls, their participating in the activities of the Apostolic Hierarchy.” Here we have at once expressed the very soul of the apostolate, “ to share the treasures of the redemption with other souls,” and the exalted, the truly inspirational character, of Catholic Action, “ participating in the activities of the Apostolic Hierarchy.”

PART I

THE NATURE AND SOURCE OF
CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I

CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY

To those who undertake the work of Catholic organization there comes very quickly an appreciation of the difficulties involved. It is so hard to move even good Catholics to any sense of their responsibility in regard to their duties towards the Church to which they belong. This difficulty arises mainly from a too narrow concept of the real meaning of membership of the Church. As a general rule Catholics do not identify themselves sufficiently with the Church. They limit themselves too often to a kind of external association and are unmindful of the depth and consolation of the teaching of Jesus Christ regarding their union as one body in the Church. No real progress can be made towards a well-planned campaign of Catholic Action until the laity are widely and thoroughly instructed in the meaning of the mystic Body of Christ. There is little use in speaking of organization or of schemes

of Catholic activity unless the source of all vitality and of growth is first fully appreciated.

Saint Paul well understood this primary need. His epistles to the early Christian churches, which he himself had founded, are insistent on the vital union of the Church with Christ and of the members with their head. Christ is made head "over all the Church, which is His body and the fullness of Him who is filled all in all" (Ephesians i, 22). Joined in Christ, as the Head, there is a compact unity also in the members amongst themselves. "For as in one body we have many members . . . so we, being many, are one body in Christ and each one members one of another" (Rom. xii, 5). This idea of the Mystic Body is no mere metaphor, but expresses a most profound reality. Through the Church, to which He is so vitally united, Christ continues the work of the Incarnation. The purpose of the Redemption was to save the entire human race. What Christ began, the Church must through His divine grace continue "unto the consummation of the world."

"The Son of God decreed that the Church should be His mystical body, with which He should be united as the head, after the manner of the human body which He assumed, to which the natural head is physiologically united. As He took to Himself a mortal body which He gave to suffering and death in order to pay the price of man's redemption,

so also He has one mystical body in which and through which He renders men partakers of holiness and of eternal salvation" (Leo XIII, "Satis Cognitum," June 20th, 1896). "The only Begotten Son of God established on earth a society which is called the Church, and to it He handed over the exalted and divine office which He received from the Father, to be continued through the ages to come" (Leo XIII, "Immortale Dei," November 1st, 1885).

By baptism each and every Catholic is literally incorporated in Christ, making with many other members the whole body. Our first thought must be one of loving admiration. Like St. Augustine we cannot remain dumb at the thought of so great a mystery of divine beneficence. "Let us congratulate ourselves, let us break forth into thanksgiving, we are become not only Christians but Christ. Do we understand, my brethren, the outpouring of God's grace upon us? Let us wonder and thrill with gladness; we are become Christ; He the head, we the members; the whole man is He and we" (St. Augustine, *Enarrat. in Ps. lxxxv, C. 1*).

The same membership is the common heritage of all. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. iii, 28). Yet in this body, which is homogeneous

by reason of membership, there is a variety of gifts and callings. The Church is a perfect society, possessing through its Head all that it requires to sustain and govern itself. Christ has regulated the entire life of His Church by bestowing on each member grace "according to the measure of the giving of Christ." "He gave," says St. Paul, "some apostles; and some prophets; and other some evangelists; and other some pastors and doctors; for the working of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Eph. iv, 11-12). "Among the members of the mystical body this diversity," says Father Prat, "does not arise from the fact that they are Christians, since in this respect there is no difference between them; nor from being men, for the differences which Nature establishes do not count from the Christian point of view; Paul ascribes it to those gratuitous gifts which the Holy Spirit grants to the faithful for the common good of the Church. . . . ALL that the Apostle says could also be applied to the ordinary hierarchy" ("Theology of St. Paul," Vol. II, p. 286, Ed. 1927).

From the very beginning of Christianity this distinction of calling is clear. "The Church is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Eph. ii, 20). The sacred Ministry was instituted by Christ Himself. Through it He con-

tinues the great work of man's redemption, and maintains the flow of grace and vitality which is essential for membership in the mystic body. Far from diminishing in any way the solidarity of the members of the Church of Christ, the ordered hierarchical ministry is its very foundation after Christ Himself. Far from there being any possibility of cleavage as between clergy and laity, it is by the union of all in the ministerial and directive power, shared in and obeyed by all, "that the whole body being compacted and fitly formed together, by what every joint supplieth, according to the operation in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in charity" (Eph. iv. 16).

This doctrine of St. Paul lies at the root of all endeavour on behalf of the Church. Seeing that the body, though composed of many parts, must ever remain one, there results the natural interest of each member in the welfare of the entire body as well as of each part. "God hath tempered the body together, giving to that which wanted the more abundant honour; that there might be no schism in the body, but that the members might be mutually careful one of another. And if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or if one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (1 Cor. xii, 26-27). Christian solidarity, it is evident, is exceedingly deep-rooted. The Church is

an organic whole and, like all living organisms, its general welfare should be the concern of all its constitutive members. This vitality is beautifully described by Father Prat. "The social function which sums up the activity of the organic body is community of life. The member does not live from its own life, but from the life of the body. For this it must be united not only to the head from which the living influx proceeds, but also to the other members of the body, each of which in its own sphere transmits life to it. Separated from the head, the member no longer lives; isolated from the other members, it would lead only an imperfect and precarious life" (*ibid.*, p. 287).

Enthusiasm and zeal on behalf of all that pertains to the Catholic Church is the natural result of the Pauline doctrine on the mystical body. Catholic Action in a broad sense originates in the divine organism of the Church. It is essential to the very life of the Church. "The man who has embraced the Christian faith," says Pope Leo XIII, "becomes a member of the greatest and holiest body, which it is the special charge of the Roman Pontiff to rule with supreme power, under its invisible Head, Christ Jesus. Now if the natural law enjoins us to love devotedly and to defend the country in which we had birth, and in which we were brought up, so that every good citizen hesitates not to face death for his native land, very much is it the urgent

duty of Christians to be ever quickened with like feelings towards the Church " (*Sapientiæ Christianæ*, January, 1890). This spirit of devotedness must necessarily establish a bond of co-operation between clergy and people. To the bishops, with the Supreme Pontiff at their head, pertains the office of feeding the flock. To them was the divine mandate given: "Go ye and teach ye all nations." Sent by Christ they alone have the power to send. Yet in this work of perpetuating the redemption they have powerful assistance. At their command is the great body of the ordained clergy, both secular and regular. At their call also awakes the enthusiasm of a Christian people. Thus by the power of Christ the entire body moves forward to ever greater and wider conquest.

From the beginning of the Church, bishops and clergy have relied on the co-operation of the faithful. St. Paul is very definite in his pronouncements on "Catholic Action." He constantly refers in his epistles to his lay helpers: "I entreat thee also, my sincere companion, help those women who have laboured with me in the Gospel with Clement and the rest of my fellow-labourers whose names are in the book of life" (Phil. iv. 3. Cf. also Rom. xvi; 1 Cor. iv, 1ss.; 1 Tim. v, 3ss.; 2 Tim. xv, 9). Catholic Action of to-day is but continuing, under new conditions, what was already done in the days of the early Church—labouring in and for the

Gospel. The Church adapts her methods to the new necessities, but her aim is ever the same—the expansion of Christ's Kingdom on earth.

“Catholic Action,” declares Pope Pius XI, “is not something new; substantially it is as old as the Church herself, though, in its present form, it has taken a more definite shape in recent times. It originates, on the one hand, from the need the ecclesiastical Hierarchy has always felt of having lay collaborators; and, on the other hand, from the desire the laity should manifest to give their generous co-operation to the peaceful triumph of the reign of Christ. . . . Our Predecessors, through the centuries that have gone, have often called upon the active zeal of the faithful, inviting them, as time and circumstances demanded, to give their ardent co-operation for the triumph of the Catholic cause” (letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toledo, November, 1929). “The worse were the times for the Church and for society, the more instant was their exhortation, like a call to arms, to fight, under the leadership of the Bishops, a holy combat and to contribute, each according to his means, to the eternal salvation of the neighbour” (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Bertram, November, 1928). Pope Pius XI likewise stresses the fundamental need of the lay apostolate. “It was Jesus Christ Himself who laid the first foundation of Catholic Action, by choosing and educating the Apostles and dis-

ciples as fellow-workers in His divine apostolate, and His example was at once followed by the first Holy Apostles as the sacred text itself proves” (“Non Abbiamo Bisogno,” June, 1931).

CHAPTER II

THE HIERARCHICAL APOSTOLATE

CATHOLIC ACTION clearly finds its source in the solidarity of membership in the mystical Body. It is necessary to determine still further the nature of the action itself. Pope Pius XI, in defining Catholic Action, calls it a participation in the hierarchical apostolate. No words could better convey the close intimacy which is established by means of the apostolate between the Church and the faithful. If living in the Church is compared to the life of the branches of the vine, yet more intimate in Christ is the union of those who fight and spend themselves on her behalf. We easily understand the noble part played in the Christian scheme of divine life by the bishops and priests of the Church. They have the power of the keys. They are the ministers of life to the whole body. But we naturally ask ourselves : By what right does the layman enter into the work of the ordained ministers ? If lay activity on behalf of the Church is to be really a participation in the divine mission of the apostolic Hierarchy, we must naturally expect some share in the power of the

apostolate. The vital interest of all the members of the Church in the general state of the mystical body does indicate a natural development of some form of lay activity ; but who would dare to define such activity as a participation in the Hierarchical Apostolate ?

What precisely is the Hierarchical Apostolate ? To appreciate fully the nature, extent and manner of the participation of the laity, it is important to have clear ideas concerning the government of the Church, of the apostolic mission, of what we may call the mechanism whereby divine life and unerring direction is transfused throughout the entire mystical Body, from the Head to all the members. In this matter we may entirely rely on papal encyclicals and on official declarations of the Church.

Pope Leo XIII reminds us : “ The Church is not an association of Christians brought together by chance, but it is a divinely established and admirably constituted society, having for its direct and proximate purpose to lead the world to peace and holiness. And since the Church alone has, through the grace of God, received the means necessary to achieve such an end, she has fixed laws, special spheres of action and a certain method, fixed and conformable to her nature of governing Christian peoples ” (“ *Sapientiæ Christianæ* ”). “ He who seeks the truth must be guided by these fundamental principles. That is to say, that Christ the Lord

instituted and formed the Church ; wherefore, when we are asked what is its nature, the main thing is to see what Christ wished, and what in fact He did " (Leo XIII, " Satis Cognitum," June 20th, 1896).

Jesus Christ built His Church on the foundation of the Apostles. They, with Peter at their head, are the original Hierarchy. From this apostolic nucleus, on which Christ conferred the power of His Priesthood, springs the great body of the Bishops of the Church. The day of the descent of the Holy Spirit marks the final perfecting of the Apostolic College. They went forth from the Cenacle fully equipped to accomplish the mission which was entrusted to them and to their successors until the end of time. The Hierarchy of the Church is no merely natural group of leaders governing a merely human, though powerful, organization. It is built on the Eternal Priesthood, the power of which has been bestowed by Christ. It is sanctified and perfected by the Holy Ghost whom Christ has sent. " As Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Ghost her soul " (Leo XIII, " Divinum Illud "). " By the Holy Ghost the Bishops are constituted, and by their ministry are multiplied not only the children but also the fathers—that is to say, the priests—to rule and feed the Church by that blood wherewith Christ has redeemed her " (*ibid.*).

The Hierarchy of the Church to-day is the

legitimate successor of the original Apostolic Hierarchy founded by Christ. It has essentially the same government and the same powers. "He who made Peter the head of the Church chose the twelve, 'whom He called Apostles' (Luke vi, 13); and just as it is necessary that the authority of Peter should be perpetuated in the Roman Pontiff, so by the fact that Bishops succeed the Apostles, they inherit their ordinary power, and thus the episcopal order necessarily belongs to the essential constitution of the Church. Although they do not receive plenary or universal authority, they are not to be looked upon as vicars of the Roman Pontiffs; because they exercise a power really their own and are most truly called the ordinary pastors of the peoples over whom they rule" (Leo XIII, "Satis Cognitum").

The Hierarchy of the Church is defined as "a group of men, who by their power to administer what is sacred and to govern the Church, are by divine right distinct from the rest of the faithful" (De Groot, "Summa Apologetica," 1892, p. 68). The Council of Trent declared in its Canons: "If anyone should say that in the Church there is not a Hierarchy, constituted by divine ordinance, which is composed of bishops, priests and ministers, let him be anathema" ("Denzinger," Ed. 1921, § 966). In its doctrine on the Sacraments the same Council states "that Bishops who have succeeded to the

place of the Apostles pertain in a special way to this hierarchical order, and that, as the Apostle says, ‘ they are placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church ’ ; that they are superior to priests, give the Sacrament of Confirmation, ordain ministers of the Church and perform many other things over which functions others of a lower order have no power ” (*ibid.*, § 960). The Episcopacy represents the highest point in the ecclesiastical Hierarchy. It enjoys the plenitude of the power of the Priesthood of Christ, so as to be enabled to transmit to others the sacerdotal power.

Under the Episcopacy and as lower grades of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, there are, in descending order, the simple Priesthood, Diaconate, Sub-Diaconate and the four Minor Orders. Thus is completed and perfected the Hierarchy according to the divine design of Christ. The power of His Eternal Priesthood is diffused over the whole earth by means of the sacramental and ministerial participation. The Church is in a very real sense heir to the Priesthood of Christ. Even as Christ by His life, His Passion and His death was the supreme and visible mediator between God and man, so the Catholic priest is with Christ and through Christ ordained to the continuance of that same mediation. “ In the Catholic Church,” says Pope Leo XIII, “ Christianity is incarnate. . . . It is the Continuation of the mission of the Saviour, the

daughter and the heiress of His Redemption” (Apostolic Letter, March 19th, 1902).

Those who constitute the great body of the Hierarchy, “set like an army in battle array” (Council of Trent), are clearly to be distinguished from the rest of the faithful. This distinction is founded on the ministerial communication of the Priesthood which is conferred by the Sacrament of Holy Orders. When the Holy Fathers invite the laity to enter the campaign of Catholic Action and participate in the Hierarchical Apostolate, there can evidently be no question of confusion between the lay and ecclesiastical state or of any sacramental and ministerial participation in the Hierarchical Orders.

We shall see in the following chapter what is the nature of lay participation. The foregoing considerations concerning the supernatural dignity and character of the ecclesiastical Hierarchy, in whose mission the lay apostle shares in some way, already convey a definite idea of the sacredness of the call to Catholic Action. It is a marvellous privilege to be invited to enter the divine mission founded by Jesus Christ and sanctified in so remarkable a way by the Holy Ghost.

CHAPTER III

LAY PARTICIPATION IN THE APOSTOLATE

CATHOLIC ACTION is not unfrequently considered, even by well-meaning Catholics, merely as an activity to which they are invited, and in which they gladly engage on behalf of the Church. It is consequently regarded rather as an external force to give added strength to the Hierarchical Apostolate, to support the action of bishops and priests. The lay apostolate goes far deeper than this. The entering of the unordained into the work of the Church is part of the Christian scheme of life as founded by the Divine Master Himself. The Christian takes his share in it, not so much because he is invited and exhorted to do so by the Vicar of Christ ; rather he is so invited and exhorted because of what is in him by divine grace. Nor does he participate in the mission entrusted by Christ to His Apostles by any merely external association. He enters into it by means of an inner and supernaturally given power ; so that the lay apostle is also divinely constituted. This supernatural power of the lay apostolate springs from the same source as the Hierarchy itself, though communicated in a

different manner—the Eternal Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

When we speak of the Priesthood of Christ as shared in by the laity, we must, on the one hand, carefully distinguish this degree of participation from that of the ordained ministers of the Church. On the other hand, it would be wrong to imagine it as something unreal or as a mere metaphorical participation in the Priesthood of Christ. St. Peter wrote to the early Christians: “You are a chosen generation, a kingly priesthood” (1 Peter ii, 9). What did such words convey to the members of the primitive Church? What do they mean for the faithful even to-day?

To appreciate the significance of St. Peter’s assertion, the doctrine of the sacramental Character will prove exceedingly helpful. Three sacraments, besides giving grace, imprint a character or spiritual mark on the soul, namely, Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders. St. Thomas lays down that each of these sacramental Characters denotes, though in a different measure, a sacramental incorporation in the High Priesthood of Christ. “Each of the faithful is deputed to receive or bestow on others things pertaining to the Worship of God. And this, properly speaking, is the purpose of the sacramental character. Now, the whole rite of the Christian religion is derived from Christ’s Priesthood. Consequently it is clear that the sacramental character is

specially the character of Christ, to Whose character the faithful are likened by reason of the sacramental characters, which are nothing else than the participations of Christ's Priesthood flowing from Christ Himself" ("Summa Theol.," III, Q. 63, art. 3).

To understand clearly the measure of lay participation in the Priesthood of Christ we must, with St. Thomas, carefully distinguish the passive from the active sharing in this priestly power. The former receives; the latter bestows. Only through the Sacrament of Holy Orders is active participation conferred, since through this sacrament power is given to administer the other sacraments. But by Baptism there is already a definite initiation into the Priesthood of Christ. By this Sacrament the soul is admitted to grace and made apt to receive of the effects of Christ's sacerdotal power. He thus enters the domain of God and is empowered to perform certain actions which are part of the great Christian cult of Almighty God. The neophyte is made one with Christ, the divine Head of the Church, Who through His Eternal Priesthood is strong to make intercession for us with His Eternal Father. "Baptism," says Billuart (Vol. 8, Dis. 4, art. 1), "pertains to recipients, because by it a power is conferred to receive the other sacraments validly."

To the participation of the Sacrament of Baptism, whereby a passive power to receive is conferred,

there is added a yet greater degree of incorporation into the Priesthood of Christ through Confirmation. The new character marks off the confirmed as a defender of what he received in Baptism, and by which he lives to God. This character is not a mere passive power, but is in a certain degree active, enrolling, as it does, those who receive it in the active service as soldiers of Christ (cf. Billuart, *ibid.*). Again this is made clear in the writings of the Angelic Doctor: "A character is a spiritual power ordained to certain actions. Just as Baptism is a spiritual regeneration unto Christian life, so also is confirmation a spiritual growth, bringing man to perfect spiritual age. . . . By the Sacrament of Confirmation man is given a spiritual power in respect of sacred actions other than those in respect of which he receives power in Baptism. For in Baptism he receives power to do those things which pertain to his own salvation, forasmuch as he lives unto himself; whereas in Confirmation he receives power to do those things which pertain to the spiritual combat with the enemies of the faith" (*ibid.*, 72, art. 5). St. Thomas, further, clearly establishes the link between this sacerdotal character and Catholic Action in so far as he indicates that with the conferring of the sacrament there is given also both the power and the office of defending the faith. "He who is confirmed, receives the *power* of publicly confessing his faith by words, as it were

ex officio (*ibid.*, Reply to Obj. 2). A similar office is indicated by the words of St. Peter. Not alone did he address the early Christians as a kingly priesthood, but laid down the purpose of this communication: "That you may declare his virtues, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (1 Peter ii, 9).

The Thomist doctrine on the sacramental character is very beautifully summed up by a recent Catholic writer: "The highest form of this sacramental incorporation into the high priesthood of Christ is contained in the sacrament of Holy Orders. This Sacrament confers the ineffaceable aptitude and full faculty of conveying the redeeming grace of Christ to the faithful in its widest extent, by word as well as by sacrament. By the priestly character the Christian is consecrated a 'minister of Christ' in the full sense of the words, and in so far as the Church is Christ living on in the world, he is consecrated the 'minister of the Church.' That Priesthood which is imparted to the Christian, along with the sacramental character of Baptism and Confirmation, is not so inward as this, nor so comprehensive, and therefore it is specifically different from the priesthood in the narrow sense of the word. It does not, as the full priesthood does, confer on the Christian the special position of a minister of the Body of Christ, and for that reason it comprises only a limited number of priestly powers. Never-

theless, it is a true priesthood, for it, just as really as the special priesthood, gives the Christian a genuine participation in the one identical priesthood of Christ. Every Baptism is a consecration to the priesthood of Christ . . . and the sacramental character of Confirmation intensifies this priesthood, since it fits the Christian to take an active share in the building of the temple of God, and equips him for the apostolate and for its 'evidences of the spirit and of power' " (Karl Adam, "The Spirit of Catholicism," trans., pp. 126-127).

This doctrine raises Catholic Action far above the idea of external though helpful association with the ministers of the Church. The lay apostolate takes its root in the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit. It is evident that the lay person, by virtue of the Sacrament of Confirmation, is not alone fortified against the dangers threatening his own spiritual life, but, as a strong and perfect Christian, he is made ready to take up arms against all that endangers the Mystical Body. He is made fit to take part in the building up, the strengthening and the enlarging of the whole edifice by the power which is given him to confess Christ and defend His truth. Through Confirmation, he receives the privilege and the power of acting with and of aiding the ministerial body—in short, of participating in the Hierarchical Apostolate.

The present Holy Father has emphasized this

dignity of Catholic Action with increasing insistence. In his letter to Cardinal Bertram he states : " But no less have We, since the beginning of Our Pontificate, striven to promote Catholic Action, and already in Our Encyclical, ' Ubi Arcano,' We have affirmed clearly that it belongs to the pastoral office and to the Christian life ; and on subsequent occasions We have expounded still further its nature and its ends, which show to those who consider it well that Catholic Action is nothing other than the participation of the laity in the Apostolate of the Hierarchy " (November 13th, 1928).

In a subsequent letter to Cardinal Segura the same Holy Father stresses the official nature of Catholic Action as well as the inner grace from which springs the power of the apostolate in the laity. " From the beginning of Our pontificate in the Encyclical ' Ubi Arcano,' We have publicly proclaimed that Catholic Action consists in the participation of the laity in the Hierarchical Apostolate of the Church ; and We have confirmed that definition in other documents, affirming that those who undertake Catholic Action are called to that *office by a very particular grace* and that that vocation is *not far removed from the sacerdotal mission*, since Catholic Action is in short nothing else but the Apostolate of the Faithful bringing their collaboration to the Church under the ministry. Whence it appears,

My Very Dear Son, how great is the dignity of that institution and how necessary in our time” (November 6th, 1929).

In yet another letter, Pope Pius XI founds the obligation of the lay apostolate on the Sacramental grace of Baptism and Confirmation. “It is the sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation which impose, amongst other obligations, that of the apostolate, that is the duty of spiritual help to our neighbour. By Confirmation we are made soldiers of Christ. Now this implies that the soldier would strive and fight, not so much for himself as for others. But even Baptism, though it be less evident to the profane eye, imposes the duty of the apostolate, because through it we become members of the Church, which is the mystical body of Christ. Among the members of this body, as of any other organism whatsoever, there must be solidarity of interests and reciprocal communication of life. ‘So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another’ (Rom. xii, 5). Each must assist the other members. No one can remain inactive; but each one, while he receives, must also give. Now every Christian receives the supernatural life which circulates in the veins of the mystical body of Christ—that abundant life which Christ Himself said He came to pour out upon the earth. ‘I am come that you may have life and may have it more abundantly’ (John x, 10). So we must

transmit it to others who do not possess it or who possess it but sparingly or only in appearance” (Letter to Cardinal Cerejeira, January, 1934).

The realization of these sublime truths concerning the Mystical Body and Christian incorporation in the Priesthood of Christ lifts Catholic Action high above the petty considerations of time and place and keeps the apostle in constant contact with the divine eternal scheme. It raises Catholic activity above the level of any merely human interest by intimately uniting it to the work of the Jesus Christ Himself. Such considerations bring assurance to the lay apostle that he does not rely on his own efforts alone, but on the permanent power of the Spirit whom he has received. The Sacrament of Confirmation is too often just a memory identified with school life. All should realize that the one act of administration is the bestowing of Him Who abides and works in and with us in accordance with the effect proper to the Sacrament. Virtue resides in us for a definite office pertaining to the Christian apostolate. Our consecration to that office is registered on our very souls by the indelible seal of God—His spiritual sign or character. No more powerful source of Catholic Action is possible than this character, which pertains to the confirming power of the Holy Spirit, or than this sharing in the Priesthood of Christ. By it we become soldiers of Christ and coadjutors of God.

CHAPTER IV

WHAT ACTION MEANS

THE term Catholic Action is now definitely accepted as best expressing the idea of the lay apostolate. For a while "Christian Democracy" seems to have served as a fitting name in certain countries, but was never widely or for long accepted. In the Encyclical of Pope Leo XIII on "Christian Democracy" this very question of the best title receives attention. "The policy of help for the people had originally no name of its own; that of *Christian Socialism* and its derivatives, which some brought in, has not undeservedly grown obsolete. Afterwards many wanted, very rightly, to name it Christian Action for the People. In some places those who devote themselves to such work are called *Christian Social Reformers*; elsewhere it is called *Christian Democracy*, and its supporters *Christian Democrats*, as opposed to the *Social Democracy*, which Socialists uphold. Of the two names that of *Christian Democracy*, if not that of *Christian Social Reform*, is offensive to many people, inasmuch as they think there is a perilous ambiguity attaching to it" ("Graves de Communi,"

1901). No small importance was attached to this question of name, and Pope Leo continues : " There is now commonly much dispute, and sometimes over-bitter dispute, on this topic, and We deem it Our duty to put an end to the controversy by defining what Catholics ought to think " (*ibid.*). Though the Holy Father's Encyclical should have cleared up all doubts as to the meaning of *Christian Democracy*, the name never became popular, and his Successor in the Chair of Peter, though for a while using both the names Christian Democracy and Christian Action (cf. *Motu Proprio*, " *Din Dalla Prima*," December, 1903), gives the title Catholic Action official sanction in subsequent encyclicals (cf. " *Il Fermo Proposito*," June 11th, 1905).

It is evident that the name " Catholic Action " was not chosen without full deliberation, as expressing most evidently the task of Catholic Action. The word " Action " does indeed imply a very definite characteristic of the apostolate and is worthy of further consideration. What is meant by action as applied to the lay apostolate ?

Though the word, as used in reference to work of the laity, is new, the idea which it conveys was proposed by the Divine Master Himself. Christ compared the mission of His Church on earth to the action of leaven in the mass of dough. " The Kingdom of Heaven is like to leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal until the

whole was leavened " (Matt. xiii, 33). A spiritual force is thus compared to chemical energy, recalling in some way the laboratory experiments with which we are familiar, in which one body is made to act on another. The leavening power of the Church must be exercised until the end of time. The benign, though strong, action of the Gospel teaching never ceases to effect its change in mankind. The Church must act continually on individuals and on society. She must meet the needs of every generation as it passes.

The action which results from the lay apostolate has a very definite meaning. Catholic Action is not the mere personal delectation in the Christian ideal of life, nor the still emptier theorizing of dreamers. It is the actual applying to the ever varying problems of human life the eternal principles of the Gospel. All this may seem self-evident: yet the Holy Fathers have deemed the matter sufficiently important to stress it in many of their encyclicals. "It is of little avail," declared Pope Pius X, "to carry on subtle discussions about many questions, or to make eloquent dissertations on rights and duties, unless all that is completed by Action. *Action*—that is the need of the present day, but an action that implies without reserve the entire and careful observance of the Divine Law and the Church's directions, an open and courageous profession of religion, an exercise of charity in its many forms

with never a thought of self or of worldly advantages ” (“ E Supremi Apostolatus,” October, 1903).

Pope Pius XI is even more insistent on the essential connection in the apostolate of action with thought. “ In effect, Catholic Action consists not merely of the pursuit of Christian perfection, which is, however, before all others, its first and greatest end, but it also consists of a true apostolate in which Catholics of every social class participate, coming thus to be united in thought and action around these centres of sound doctrine and multiple social activity, legitimately constituted, and, as a result, aided and sustained by the authority of the Bishops ” (letter to Cardinal Bertram). He is even more explicit in his letter to the Cardinal Patriarch of Lisbon. “ When these fundamental truths of the faith are well weighed by the faithful We do not doubt that a new spirit of the apostolate will fill their hearts and manifest itself in zealous action, since true life cannot be conceived without action, action being not only a manifest but a necessary coefficient and the very measure of life ” (January, 1934).

The Holy Father does not exclude personal perfection from Catholic Action. It is its primary purpose. In fact the sincere living of the Catholic life is of itself a powerful influence for good. A Catholic who is true to his faith in all circumstances cannot fail to exercise an influence on his surround-

ings by the unconscious force of his example. But naturally Catholic Social Action goes farther than this. It not alone believes in, but proclaims the principles which govern social life, applies them to the conditions that prevail, creates a public opinion in their favour by manifesting their power for the good of society. Finally it seeks their fulfilment, in one way or another, as opportunity offers, through the exercise of the legislative or administrative power of a Christianized community.

Pope Pius X describes the general mode and efficacy of this kind of social action. "The goodness and justice of Christian principles, the moral right which Catholics acknowledge, their entire disinterestedness in what is personal to themselves, the frankness and sincerity with which they seek only the true, the solid and the highest good of their neighbour; finally, their evident aptitude of serving, better than others, the true economic interests of the people—all that cannot fail to make an impression on the mind and heart of all those who listen to them, to strengthen their ranks so as to form a solid and compact body capable of rigorously resisting the contrary current, and of being respected by their adversaries" ("Il Fermo Proposito," June 11th, 1905).

It is exceedingly important that the practical side of Catholic Social Action be borne in mind. There are many who imagine that they have given generous

support to the apostolate, once they have spoken fine words or offered empty criticisms, but who will never face a definite issue. Ideals are of little value unless we translate them fearlessly into action. *Res non verba*—We must have deeds, not mere words. Not that we should ever minimize the necessity of thought, but we should think, we should observe, with the object not so much of constructing grand theories, but of putting them into practice. “Efficacious action,” says a French social worker and writer, “belongs neither to impulse without reflection or lasting earnestness, nor to the inefficacious thinking of the dreamer, who holds himself aloof from the crowd, but to the harmonious, inseparable unity of reflection and effort, of faith and prudence, of love and energy. To-day, as yesterday, let us be real men; that is to say, let us dare to be collaborators with God—with God, Who clothed Himself in our humanity in order to unite us to Himself, and calls on us now to be His coadjutors in establishing justice and peace on earth ” (M. Bertrand).

PART II

THE NECESSITY OF CATHOLIC ACTION

CHAPTER I

INHERENT DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

THE Church, which with its Head and Founder, Jesus Christ, enters so fully in the divine design, is the instrument for the eternal salvation of the human race. It must carry out the plan to which it was divinely appointed by God. The mission of the Church is necessary because God has so willed. The Church and its mission must go on until the end of time and carry on its work from generation to generation. If we view the apostolate in this general aspect as the fulfilling of the divine design for man's salvation, it is clearly both necessary and permanent. The work committed by Christ to His Apostles and their successors must by divine ordinance be continued until the end of time. Catholic Action in the sense of the leavening action of the Church is a necessary institution against which the gates of Hell itself cannot prevail.

On the Bishops of the Church primarily lies the responsibility of conducting the apostolic mission. The clergy, both regular and secular, are bound to

the exercise of the apostolate in accordance with their consecration or profession. Members of the various religious orders approved by the Holy See are by virtue of their rule similarly obliged to the Apostolate by the voluntary dedication of their vows to some particular work on behalf of the Church. These different groups are consecrated to God and His divine service in accordance with the particular end or purpose of each. The pursuing of this purpose becomes through the vows life's daily obligation. Religious profession, even in lay congregations, clearly distinguishes those who make it from the ordinary laity. It dedicates them to the divine intention of Christ through the contemplative or the active life. A definite necessity lies on those who, either through Holy Orders are dedicated to the ministry, or who through the vows are consecrated to the religious state, to devote their lives to the cause of Christ.

Our main concern is, however, with the participation of the laity in this development of the work of Christ. How far is it necessary to have a lay apostolate? To what extent is the Catholic lay man or woman obliged to take part in this apostolate? What duty rests on the clergy themselves to avail themselves of this co-operation of the laity? These questions are of no small importance to the clergy and to the laity. The correct answer to them must depend on the will of the Divine Master, as

made manifest to us in particular through authoritative declarations of His Vicars on earth.

What has been said of the nature and source of Catholic Action already determines its necessity. Christ, Who founded His Church so wisely and made all the faithful members of His mystical body and recipients of the power of His spirit, clearly intended to establish the lay apostolate as a means towards the building up of His Kingdom on earth. The lay apostolate is necessary by reason of the divine will of Jesus Christ, who "laid its first foundation." For this reason Pope Pius XI declares that the modern campaign of Catholic Action is but the "accepting of a duty which the Apostles already inculcated" (Discourse to the International Pilgrimage of Catholic Youth, October, 1924), and describes it as "a means accorded by Divine Providence" (letter to Cardinal Bertram).

The attitude of the clergy to the lay apostolate depends, not on what, for one reason or another, they may think themselves, but rather on the mind of the Church. "If such works seem arduous to the pastors and burdensome to the faithful, we must remember that they are *necessary* and are *fundamental duties* of the pastoral office and are at the very roots of the Christian life" ("Ubi Arcano Dei," December, 1922). The Bishops and priests of the Church are by the very nature of things the centre of the apostolate, around which the laity must group. The

lay apostle does not act of himself, but through and with the divinely appointed guides. For this reason the Holy Father insists on the need of a special training in this matter. "No easy task is here imposed on the clergy, wherefore all candidates for the priesthood must be adequately prepared to meet it by the intense study of social matters" ("Quadragesimo Anno," May 15th, 1931). The purpose of such a training for student priests is to fulfil more perfectly the obligation of organizing the laity. "It is your *chief duty* and that of your clergy to seek diligently, to select prudently and to train fittingly these lay apostles" (*ibid.*).

"It is made manifest how it merits every consideration and all the support . . . of bishops and priests, who know well that it is the pupil of our eyes" (letter to Cardinal Bertram). "To the clergy, then, more particularly we renew the invitation extended to them in the 'Quadragesimo Anno' that they may, without delay and with a united and concordant will, gird themselves for this work so *urgently needed* for the salvation of souls" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

An objection is sometimes raised to the organization of Catholic Action on the grounds of lay interference. There is a natural dislike amongst Catholic clergy of any form of undue intrusion of the laity into the sphere exclusively reserved to priests. It should be remembered that Catholic Action is not

of such a kind. It proposes to serve, not to command. It is far removed from that dreadful anomaly of lay dictation which one witnesses in Protestant congregations. Catholic Action is a supple and well ordered instrument of co-operation in the hands of the clergy, who know how to avail themselves of it.

In their endeavour to organize Catholic Action the clergy do not rely merely on their own power of persuasion. If there is an obligation on them to avail of the power of the lay apostolate, they should remember that a similar duty is incumbent on their people to come to their assistance. Catholic Action is not a matter of free choice for the laity any more than for the clergy. From what has been said of the mystical Body of Christ the necessity on the part of the laity is already apparent. The declarations of successive Holy Fathers make this participation a matter of precept. "It is plainly necessary," declared Pope Pius X, "to take part individually in a work so important, not only for the sanctification of our own souls, but also in order to increase and extend the Kingdom of God" ("Il Fermo Proposito," 1905). Pope Pius XI, whilst expressing the hope that many "will hearken to the appeal of their pastors and enrol themselves in this apostolic army," stresses the need of reminding the laity of their obligation in the matter of Catholic Action. "For such a purpose it will be useful to make them

fully understand, since many of the faithful are still unaware of it, that the apostolate is one of the duties inherent in the Christian life" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira, 1905).

This question of individual obligation is of great importance. It follows that there is no question of a mere mass obligation which, once it is fulfilled by some, exonerates all others. The difficulty about the extent of the obligation arises from the opinions that have been held by some writers that Catholic Action is essentially an apostolate of an élite—of a chosen body of workers. It is quite true that Pope Pius XI speaks of "prudent selection" ("Quadragesimo Anno") and wishes for quality rather than quantity (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira). Properly understood, there is no contradiction in these two opinions. Catholic Action is an apostolate for all, and also a very special apostolate for an élite.

Pope Pius X emphasized the general character of the apostolate in his first letter to the Bishops of the Church. "It is not Our idea that in this arduous task of the renovation of the world through Christ, you and your clergy should remain without assistants. We know that God has commanded to each one the care of the neighbour (Eccles. xvii, 12). Not those only who are priests, but all the faithful without exception, should devote themselves to the interests of God and of souls; not indeed each one according to his own views and tendencies,

but always under the direction and according to the wish of the Bishops, because the right to command, to teach and to direct belongs to no one else in the Church but to you, ‘ placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God ’ ” (“ E Supremi Apostolatus,” October 4th, 1903).

Pope Pius XI is even more emphatic regarding this aspect of the Church’s appeal. “ Catholic Action should be the universal and harmonious action of all Catholics, without exception of age or sex, of social condition, of culture or of national and political tendencies ” (letter to Cardinal Bertram). In a subsequent letter he declares : “ It is necessary, then, that all should be apostles. The laity must not remain inactive but united to the ecclesiastical hierarchy, docile to its orders ; it should take part in the holy battles and, by absolute devotion, by prayer and generous action, co-operate to reanimate the faith and restore Christian morals ” (letter to Cardinal Segura).

All are definitely called ; but amongst the faithful there are some who, because of special circumstances, can give a more efficacious help. Pope Leo XIII appealed to those of the community who, because of their greater leisure, their higher intellectual formation, their more abundant share of this world’s goods, have a greater responsibility in the sight of God (cf. “ Sapientiæ Christianæ,” January 10th, 1890). “ It is of im-

portance," declares the same Holy Father, "that the influence of these undertakings should be extended by the multiplication of men and means devoted to the same object. Especially must there be appeals to the kindly assistance of those whose rank, worldly wealth and culture give them importance in the community. If their help is excluded, scarcely anything can be done which will be of any assistance in the wants which now clamour for satisfaction in this matter of the welfare of the people. Assuredly the more earnestly many of those who are prominent in the State conspire effectively to attain that object, the quicker and sooner will the end be reached. We wish them to understand that they are not at all free to look after or neglect those who happen to be beneath them. For no one lives only for his personal advantage in a community. He lives for the common good as well; so that, when others cannot contribute their share for the general object, those who can do so are obliged to make up the deficiency" ("Graves de Communi," January 18th, 1901).

It would seem, then, proper to conclude that all the faithful are indeed called to take part in the general scheme of Catholic Action. Each one fulfils this obligation by availing of the opportunities his life and circumstances provide. Catholic Action in this general sense is a very wide apostolate, including an immense field of activity for the indi-

vidual as well as for associated groups. The needs of this apostolate are fulfilled by prayer, charitable works, activities of St. Vincent de Paul societies, etc. But there is a particular type of Catholic Action which demands a special training. This of its very nature must be reserved. Catholic Action, as a specialized form of the apostolate, is a scientific campaign and is mainly concerned with the social question. It is of this kind of Catholic Action that the Holy Father speaks when he declares : "Amongst the various forms of the apostolate Catholic Action is most deserving of the Church's praise, as most suitable to those new needs of the present day, which have arisen from the wicked widespread campaign of laicization that has been so long sustained" (Pope Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Cerejeira). Of the particular and very modern necessity of this campaign, we will deal in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

INSTANT CALL TO ARMS

THE Church is a divine institution imbued with power to accomplish her appointed task amidst the ever-changing circumstances of human life. From her Founder, who foresaw all the dangers which would threaten her existence, she received a virtue to withstand, if need be, the very powers of darkness. Though old in time, she ever renews her youth. With an experience of two thousand years of history, she knows human life and is able to meet the needs of humanity as they arise. Destined by her Founder to last until the end of time, she stands majestically erect and calm amidst the storm, and, in spite of the fierce onslaughts of her enemies, resolutely maintains her divine action on human life. When the forces of human malice are more particularly rallied against her, she calls on the spiritual energies with which she is endowed and sets out, as she was bidden to do, "to conquer evil in good."

"The worse were the times for the Church and

for society, the more instant was her call to arms to fight a holy combat " (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Bertram). The Church must adapt her methods of spiritual conquest to the new necessities which arise. Like her Divine Master, she is a sign to be contradicted, but the greater the contradiction, the more must she manifest her God-given power to assert the truth of Christ.

Modern Catholic Action is the natural reaction of the Church in the face of widespread and terrible apostacy, which now threatens the very existence of Christian civilization. The apostolate is a necessary adjunct of the Christian life, but the urgency of the present dangers which threaten the faith make the necessity still more pressing. In the face of such dangers the follower of Christ has a clear duty. It is not sufficient merely to believe ; once the faith is threatened the individual Christian must be ready to defend. He must be prepared to die, if need be, in that defence.

The necessity of a very special activity on behalf of the faith is to-day apparent to all who realize what is at stake. " The nations of the earth have come together against God and against His Christ." Hardly a day passes without some new manifestation of hatred of the teachings of Christianity. A world that has already sorely suffered because of its infidelity seeks yet greater disaster in a yet more complete abandonment of life-giving truth. Never

was the struggle between good and evil more intense. In the ages of faith opposition to the Church's teaching was mainly individual. There were no powerful associations, armed with all the means provided by modern science, for the avowed purpose of destroying the rights of God in His creation. To-day, when the forces of evil are organized against the Christian life, it is not surprising that the Church should have sounded the alarm. She has issued a call to arms to her children to meet the onslaught of her enemies. But the defence must be suited to the attack. Trained soldiers are needed in this army "set in battle array" to conquer the world again even as Christ conquered it. Individual action can do little or nothing. Organization must be met by organization. All are called upon to prepare and train themselves for Catholic Action and to take part in holy battles with the Church. Social peace and security can only be obtained for an oppressed world by a return to Christian principles, but that return will demand sacrifice now, as in the beginning of Christianity.

The Encyclicals of the Holy Fathers have repeatedly emphasized the seriousness for human society of the present trend of human affairs, as well as the urgent need of meeting the situation by a new and well-organized apostolate. Already in 1891 Pope Leo issued a solemn warning: "The elements

of conflict now raging are unmistakable . . . the momentous gravity of things now obtaining fills every mind with painful apprehension ” (“ *Rerum Novarum* ”). Ten years later he declared : “ The condition of things at present proclaims, and proclaims vehemently, that there is need for a union of brave minds with all the resources they can command ” (“ *Graves De Communi* ”). Pope Pius X issued similar warnings. Pope Benedict XV, whose reign was saddened by the awfulness of the Great War, spoke of the “ spectacle presented by Europe, nay, by the whole world, as perhaps the saddest and most mournful spectacle of which there is any record ” (“ *As Beatissimi*, ” November, 1914).

Since Pope Leo's time conditions have grown steadily worse. Pope Pius XI declared in his Encyclical letter of May, 1932 : “ If we pass in review the long and terrible sequence of woes that, as a sad heritage of sin, mark the stages of fallen man's earthly pilgrimage from the Flood on, it would be hard to find spiritual and material distress so deep, so universal as that which we are now experiencing ; even the greatest scourges that left indelible traces in the lives and memories of peoples, struck only one nation at a time. Now, on the contrary, the whole of humanity is held bound by the financial and economic crisis, so fast that the more it struggles the harder appears the task of loosening its bonds ; there is no people, there is no

State, no society or family which, in one way or another, directly or indirectly, to a greater or less extent, does not feel the repercussion ” (“ Charitate Christi Compulsi ”).

The evils which are outlined by the Holy Father are grave in themselves, but become still more serious by serving as an excuse for every kind of excess. “ Profiting by so much economic disorder, the enemies of the social order, be they called communist or any other name, boldly set about breaking through every restraint. This is the most dreadful evil of our times. . . . Thus we see to-day what was never before seen in history, the satanical banners of war against God and against religion brazenly unfurled to the winds in the midst of all peoples, and in all parts of the earth ” (*ibid.*). The Church’s need becomes still more imperious when we consider the powerful organization which lies behind this new atheism. The propaganda of the enemies of truth must be met with equally powerful propaganda on the part of the Church. The Holy Father outlines the methods used by modern atheism : “ Well organized, it works its way into the elementary schools ; it appears in theatres ; to propagate itself, it makes use of its own films, of the gramophone and the radio ; with its own printing presses, it produces booklets in every language ; it promotes special exhibitions and public parades ; it has formed its own political

parties and its own economic and military systems ” (*ibid.*).

The Church does not merely denounce and warn ; she must act ; she must meet the new crisis. She declares Catholic Action to be the necessary and providential means to combat the evils that threaten Christian social order. Leo XIII not alone saw the danger, but immediately reminded all Christians of their duty. “ Amid such reckless and widespread folly of opinion, it is the office of the Church to undertake the defence of truth and to uproot errors from the mind. . . . When necessity compels, not those only who are invested with the power of rule are bound to safeguard the integrity of faith, but, as St. Thomas maintains, ‘ Each one is under an obligation to show forth his faith, either to instruct and encourage others of the faithful, or to repel the attacks of unbelievers ’ (2a, 2ae, Q. III, 2 ad 2). To recoil before an enemy, or to keep silence when from all sides such clamours are raised against truth, is the part of a man who is either devoid of character or who entertains doubt of the truth of what he professes to believe. In either case such a mode of behaviour is base, insulting to God, and incompatible with the salvation of mankind. This kind of conduct is profitable only to the enemies of the faith, for nothing emboldens the wicked so greatly as the lack of courage on the part of the good. . . . Christians are, moreover, born for

combat, whereof the greater the vehemence, the more assured, God aiding, the triumph: 'Have confidence; I have overcome the world' " ("Sapientiae Christianae").

Pope Pius XI is equally insistent on the necessity of Catholic Action "in response to the growing needs of the day." "Especially in our time, when the integrity of faith and customs is always gravely menaced and when priests, because of the scantiness of their number, are powerless to meet the necessities of souls, it is all the more urgent to have recourse to Catholic Action, thanks to which the laity, in supplying numerous collaborators to the apostolate, comes to the aid of the clergy and supplements its small number. The idea of sustaining the clergy in this manner was held by our predecessors, and already put into practice when, in the most terrific difficulties of the Church and of humanity, they sounded, so to speak, the rally call; they exhorted fervently all the faithful to fight, under the direction of the Bishops, holy battles, and provide for themselves eternal salvation in the world to come" (letter to Cardinal Bertram).

The gravity of the menace which threatens the Christian social order makes Catholic Action not a matter of choice but of urgent necessity. Addressing the Bishops of the world, the same Holy Pontiff affirms: "It is necessary therefore, venerable Brethren, that, without faltering, we 'set up a wall

for the house of Israel ' (Ezech. xii, 5), a compact line against the battalions of evil, enemies of God no less than of the human race. For in this conflict there is really question of the fundamental problem of the universe and of the most important decision proposed to man's free will. For God or against God, this once more is the alternative that shall decide the destinies of all mankind " (" Caritate Christi Compulsi "). " You are aware of the times in which we live and what they demand of our Catholic forces. On the one side We deplore the fact that society becomes ever more pagan ; that the faith grows weaker in men's minds, and with it the Christian outlook. Purity and integrity become obscured in a most terrible manner. On the other hand, we behold with grief that the clergy, either because in certain districts they are not sufficiently numerous, or because in many places there is opposition to their benign influence and they cannot make their voices heard or their admonitions felt, are too unequal to the necessities and demands of our time. All then must be apostles ; the laity must not remain inactive " (letter to Cardinal Segura).

CHAPTER III

THE HARVEST OF MISERY

CATHOLIC Social Action is an evident necessity by reason of the modern menace to Christianity. The Vicars of Christ, who have commanded it, have appealed to the dire straits to which human affairs are reduced through the abandonment of Christian principles. But to appreciate more completely the necessity of the modern apostolate it is well to emphasize its importance still more by pointing out the development of social thought and practice which has involved the world in such fearful disaster.

It is hardly necessary to state that the present condition of society, so graphically described in the encyclicals, is not just a sudden and unheralded calamity. It comes as the culmination of error so radical as to affect the entire social order, which disrupted the relations between man and his Creator as well as between man and man. "Such impiety does not spring up overnight. For a long time it has been eating its way into the very vitals of society" (Pius XI, "Quas Primas," December 11th,

1925). The fundamental mistake of to-day is to attribute present social evils to purely economic causes. If these were the only issue there would be no need of any action on the part of the Church. It cannot, indeed, be denied that economic causes have exercised a very profound influence on society. A history of social conditions must take into account, for instance, the revolution of industry through the introduction of machinery, the extraordinary developments of science as factors in production and distribution. But these things would not have disrupted the social order were it not that side by side with them there grew up also a false philosophy of human life. The industrial revolution was a good thing in itself; it served an evil purpose by becoming an instrument of greed of the liberalist or capitalist. Because of the impoverishment of the spirit of Christianity, the failure to appreciate its unchanging principles, which apply to the rich as well as to the poor, the evolutionary changes of accidental economic forces precipitated a revolution in social conditions and broke up the essential relations on which peaceful and prosperous human existence depends.

Pope Leo XIII described our modern social evils as a "Harvest of Misery." "As a man sows so shall he reap," is an unerring law for the individual as well as for society. "He who sows in corruption shall reap corruption." Under the pretence of

reform entire nations abandoned the unity of Christian truth and plunged the world into evils from which they are now powerless to extricate it. "Would that all men would judge the tree by its fruits, and would acknowledge the seed and origin of the evils which press upon us, and of the dangers that are impending" (Leo XIII, "Humanum Genus," 1884).

The Protestant Reformation, by setting up private judgment as the supreme criterion of truth, withdrew men's allegiance from the Catholic Church. Under the guise of liberty it alienated many minds from the source of divine truth. The natural consequence of this so-called freedom was to plunge the world into all kinds of error, to deprive it of the unerring guidance which was so clearly to be a character of the true Church of Christ. The History of Protestantism proclaims the truth of Our Divine Lord's words: "Abide in me; and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abide in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in me. . . . If anyone abide not in me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall wither" (John xv, 4).

The fearful and widespread denial of divine truth, which had its origin in the teachings of the apostate monk Luther, is responsible for the evils which now oppress the world. Dogmatic errors which affected belief in the mysteries of faith first destroyed the spirit of religion and, by gradually inducing a

false philosophy of life, attacked the very foundations of Christian social life. Thus States lost the Catholic mentality. Religion, if tolerated at all, either became the business of State departments and was regulated by Act of Parliament, or was proclaimed to be exclusively a matter of private concern. Hence arose secularist and neutralist ideas of government and the complete schism between Church and State. These tendencies were first brought to unhappy fruition in the French Revolution and in the false philosophies of Rousseau and others, which fomented that grave unrest.

The ideas of the reformers also affected very deeply social conditions. It was but natural that the social institutions which had grown out of the ideals of Christianity would find but little sympathy in an atmosphere of individualism. Under the guise of liberty, the unbridled licence of the individual developed into heartless oppression of the weak. Each one sought his own selfish gain, no matter what might be the consequences for others. Thus the fundamental Christian institution of private property under the impulse of greed became perverted capitalism, so that, as Pope Leo XIII declared, "A small number of very rich men have been able to lay on the teeming masses of the labouring poor a yoke little better than slavery itself" ("Rerum Novarum").

The Guild system, under which equitable con-

ditions were maintained for the worker as well as for the employer, was utterly out of keeping with the pseudo-Christianity of the Reformers. Furnishing, as it did, a protection for the weaker members of the social order against man's greed, it was no part of the individualist scheme of life. All such organizations were ruthlessly swept aside, and the masses of the working class were left all unprotected. Bitterness and class struggle developed where before Christian Charity and justice dominated. When after a prolonged and bitter fight for their rights the workers at last secured new associations, the old traditions of the Guild system of fraternity and industry were well-nigh forgotten. The new unions were built up on hate and, won at so great a cost, thrived on the idea of class warfare. Inspired by vengeance for terrible wrongs, the leaders of the working class sought another extreme to right the wrongs of individualist capitalism. To kill individualism they destroyed the individual by a theory of socialism. Individualist capitalism and materialist socialism are the twin children of the so-called Protestant Reform.

Pope Pius XI shows how far Protestant individualism has affected the social order. "You assuredly know, Venerable Brethren and Beloved Children, and you lament the ultimate consequences of this individualistic spirit in economic affairs. Free competition is dead; economic dictatorship

has taken its place. Unbridled ambition for domination has succeeded the desire for gain; the whole economic life has become hard, cruel and relentless in a ghastly measure. Furthermore, the intermingling and scandalous confusion of the duties and offices of civil authority and of economics have produced crying evils and have gone so far as to degrade the majesty of the State " ("Quadragesimo Anno").

"The Harvest of Misery" which is even now being reaped as a result of the Reformation was likewise clearly outlined by Pope Leo XIII. "Venerable Brethren, you know full well that the atrocious war which, starting from the sixteenth century, was declared against the Catholic faith by the Reformers, and which has been growing from day to day in vehemence, aimed at giving free course to the rejection of all revelation, the subversion of the supernatural order, and the enthronement of unaided reason, with its vagaries, or rather ravings. Deriving pretentiously its name from reason, this false doctrine, by flattering and stimulating the eagerness to outstrip others, which is interwoven with man's nature, and giving rein to every kind of unlawful desire, has taken unwilling possession of the minds of great numbers, and has even pervaded the whole of civilized society. Hence by a fresh act of impiety, unknown even to the pagans, governments have been organized

without God and the order established by Him being taken at all into account. It has even been contended that public authority, with its dignity and its power of ruling, originates not from God but from the mass of the people, which, considering itself unfettered by all divine sanction, refuses to submit to any laws that it has not itself passed of its own free will. Next, having attacked and cast away the supernatural truths of faith as being contrary to reason, the very Author and Redeemer of mankind has been forced slowly and gradually from the scheme of studies at universities, colleges and high schools as well as from all the practical working of public life. . . . With such doctrines spread far and wide, and such license in thought and action, it is no wonder that men of the most lowly condition, heartsick of a humble home or poor workshop, should fix eager eyes on the abodes and fortunes of the wealthy; no wonder that tranquillity no longer prevails in public and private life, or that the human race has been hurried onward to well-nigh the verge of ruin" ("Quod Apostolici Muneris").

In another Encyclical he emphasizes again this evil result of the Protestant Reformation. "Sad it is to call to mind how the harmful and lamentable rage for innovation, which rose in the sixteenth century to a climax, threw first into confusion the Christian religion, and next, by natural sequence,

invaded the precincts of philosophy, whence it spread amongst all classes of society. From this source, as from a fountain-head, burst forth all those later tenets of unbridled licence which, in the midst of the terrible upheavals of the last century, were widely conceived and boldly proclaimed as the principles and foundation of that new jurisprudence which was not alone previously unknown, but was at variance in many points with not only the Christian, but even with the natural law. Amongst these principles the main one lays down that, as all men are alike by nature and race, so in like manner all are equal in the control of their life; that each one is so far his own master as to be in no sense under the rule of any other individual; that each is to be free to think on any subject just as he may choose, and to do whatever he may like to do" ("Immortale Dei," November 1st, 1885).

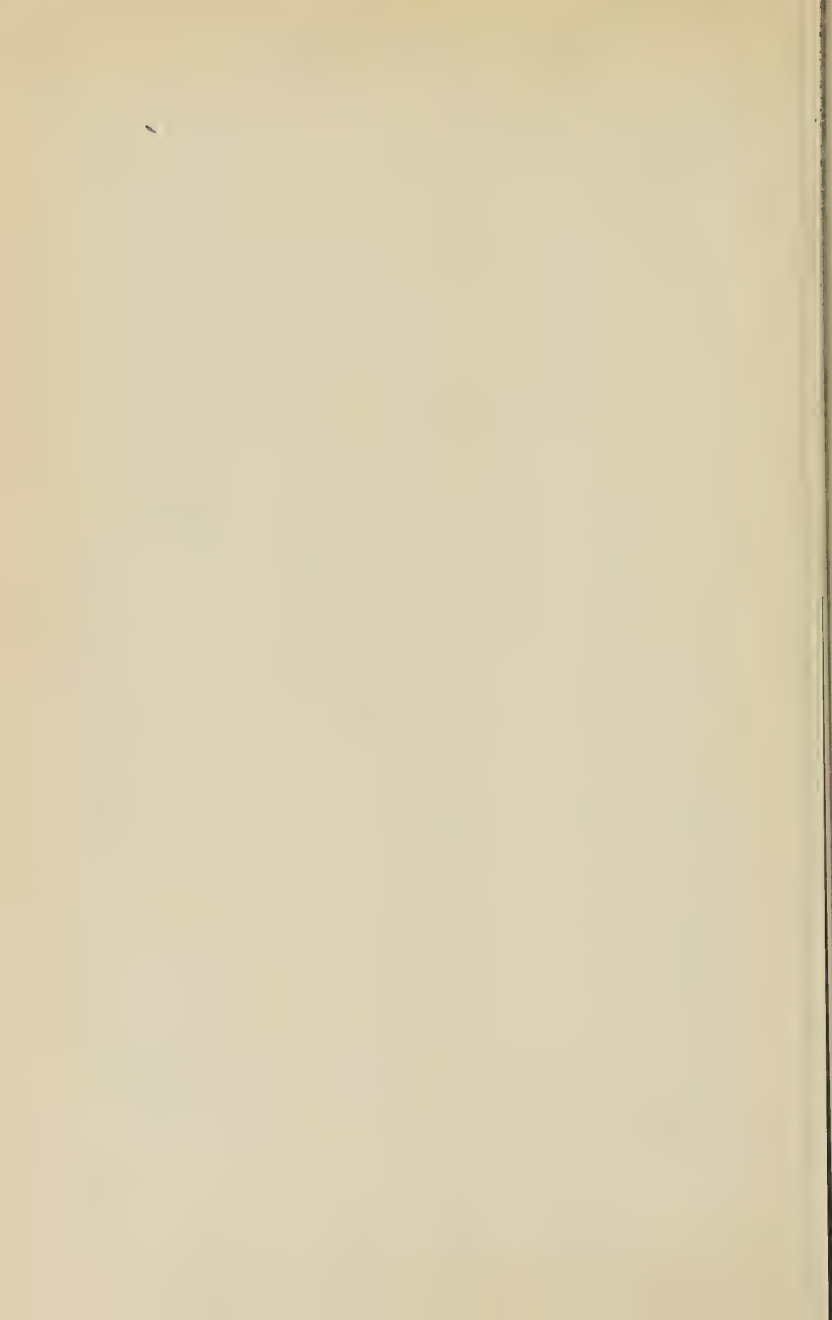
The colossal error of Protestantism shook the very foundations of Christian civilization. Because of the dreadful mass of ills which resulted and are to-day sapping social peace, Catholic Action is a matter of urgent necessity. From these ills Ireland was not exempt. It should be remembered that the Protestant Reformation had very dire consequences in this country. For more than three hundred years the Irish people withstood all attempts of a foreign power to foist Protestantism upon them. They triumphed magnificently. In spite of the

bitterest persecution that human malice could frame they remained steadfast to the faith of Christ. Edmund Burke declared that the Penal Code was "a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man." Such a regime could not fail altogether in its effect. It engendered a slave mind in the mass of the people. It stamped out initiative. It destroyed our traditions of national and Catholic culture. For centuries we had perforce to hide our faith and all its observances. Now, when we have regained our Catholic freedom, we find ourselves lacking in appreciation of what our forefathers preserved at such a cost. Do we not still keep it hidden? Is not our very national government tainted with the Protestant heritage of secularism and neutrality? How was it, when, as a Catholic nation, we wrote our national constitution, that there was not even a mention of the name of God? We have wandered so far from the ideal of a Christian State that we forget its very existence.

It should be remembered also that our social and economic life was for centuries almost completely controlled by a Protestant ascendancy. The spirit of liberalism and individualism permeated our institutions. During the last century the Catholic

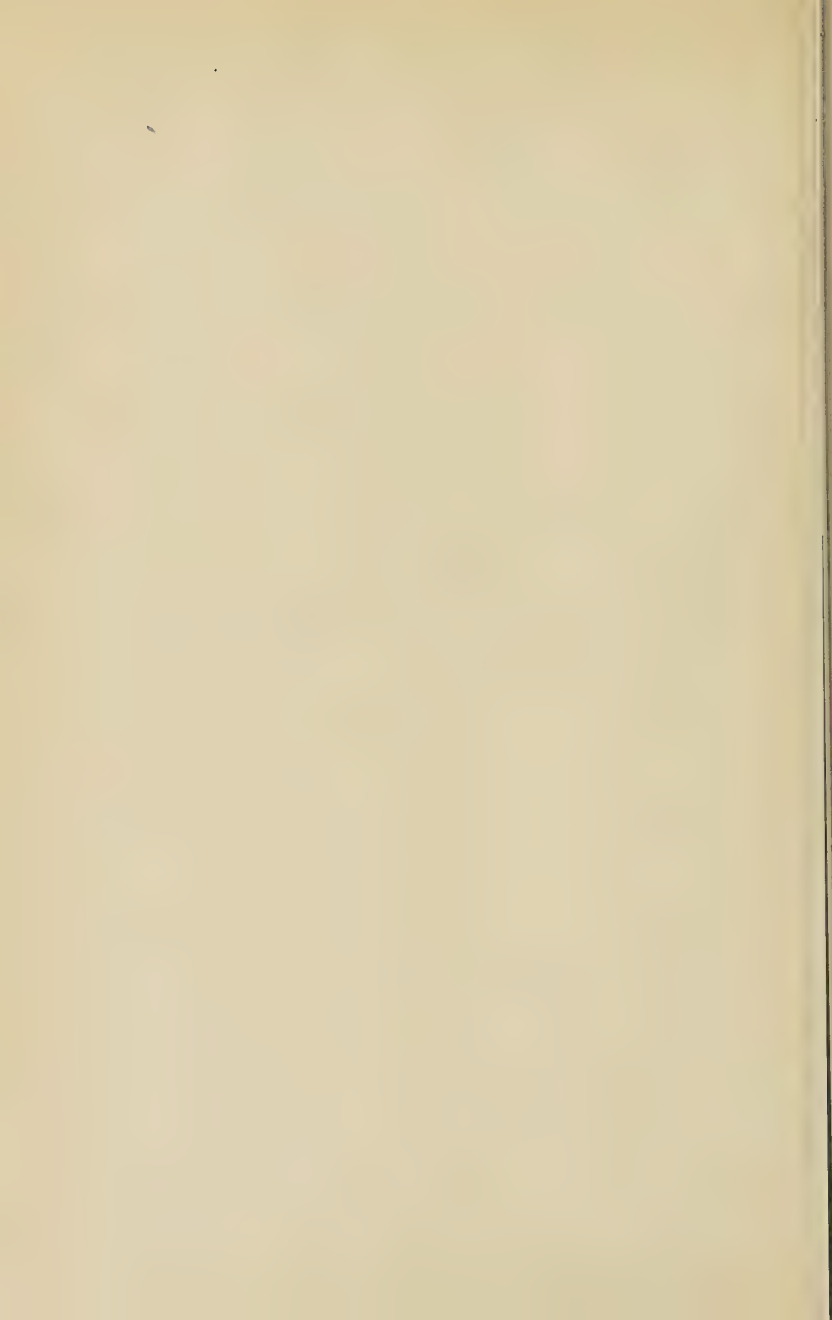
population has regained in no small measure financial and business control. But we may well ask how far the business life of the country, even when in Catholic hands, is tainted with liberalism and individualism? Far too much business is just business, and its sole purpose is inordinate gain.

The need of a campaign of Catholic Action is apparent amongst ourselves as throughout the world. The economic crisis has not left us untouched. In Ireland, as elsewhere, it is not due merely to material forces, but to the abandonment of the social principles of Christianity. There are some amongst us who would trade on the misery of the unfortunate to plunge this country into the vortex of red revolution, of Godlessness and rank materialism. It is to be hoped that the good sense of our Catholic people will be proof against any such attempts. But it should be borne in mind that many things are crying out for reform, that the effects of the Protestant Reformation are still with us and must be eradicated by a speedy return to the Christian ideal of social life. This return will be powerfully aided by the creation of a strong campaign of genuine Catholic Action which, under the guidance of the Hierarchy and above all party politics, will form a solid public opinion in all classes and in all parties in favour of a Christian solution of our social and national difficulties.



PART III

THE PURPOSE OF CATHOLIC ACTION



CHAPTER I

THE RESTORING OF ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

It is necessary to have an idea of the general purpose of Catholic Action before determining in detail the particular objects which this apostolate has in view. Pope Pius XI lays down in his definition of Catholic Action that the purpose of the apostolate by the laity is "the defence of moral and religious principles, the development of a holy and benevolent social action in order to instal Catholic life in family and in society" (letter to Women's International Congress, July, 1928). We have already seen how fierce and how well organized is opposition to these very principles which the Holy Father invites us to restore. The world is in dire need of a Christian renovation, and yet counters truth's benign conquest with diabolical hatred. Catholic Action is inspired by this world need and, confident in the Divine Master's assurance, is prepared to send its apostles of truth and, should the call come, its martyrs into the arena. Catholic Action is a practical science. It seeks to instal the social order in which it believes. It must not alone convince

the mind, but must strive to build up a social order in keeping with the principles it inculcates. It is in actually applying Catholic principles to social conditions that Catholic Action begins. Though to convert the mind to truth is already action, yet mere mental adhesion to truth is of little avail unless the truth become a governing factor in social order and organization.

To appreciate the general purpose and extent of the influence of the Catholic apostolate we must view life from its ultimate principle or source. The most serious abuses in the present social order come from a narrowing down of the meaning of life to merely temporal concerns. Human life is devoid of meaning when we refuse to take into consideration the Divine Mind from Whom all life has come. Creation and Redemption are the two supreme determining principles in human life. Man is from God and is re-established in Him through Jesus Christ and through the Church which He established on earth to continue for all time His redeeming mission.

The fall of our First Parents is no mere myth. Its profound and disastrous effects are only too painfully evident. It not only destroyed what man possessed by grace with his hope of eternal supernatural beatitude, but cruelly disrupted the natural powers for good he received from His Creator. The effect of original sin permeated every aspect of

human life and poisoned human existence. Man's reason was darkened, his will was weakened. The two great faculties whereby he was likened to God Himself were so affected as to be at times controlled by the appetites of a purely animal existence. He who was made little less than the angels by creation became by the fall a slave of his lower passions. The order of reason was disturbed by the dictates of sensual appetites. God made man the Lord of Creation, that by a right use of temporal things he might become more fully the child of God and live in perfect accord with the Divine Mind. But instead of finding such an aid in temporal things, man, by his fallen nature, was open to grave error in the use of the things of earth. These things had their place in enabling man to obtain the completest expression of himself in accordance with the divine plan, but he began so to love the things of earth as to forget the rights of God.

Pope Pius XI describes how radical are the effects of this fall even in present-day economic and social life. "The fundamental cause of this defection from the Christian law in social and economic matters, and of the apostacy of many working men from the Catholic Faith which has resulted from it, is the disorderly affection of soul, a sad consequence of original sin, the source of these and all other evils. By original sin the marvellous harmony of men's faculties has been so deranged that now he

is easily led astray by low desires, and strongly tempted to prefer the transient goods of this world to the lasting goods of Heaven. Hence comes that unquenchable thirst for riches and temporal possessions which at all times has impelled men to break the law of God and trample on the rights of their neighbour" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

In the midst of this human hopelessness there stands out the figure of the Redeemer, in Whom all things are restored. Through Him human life receives back its meaning as it was originally established in the mind of God. Through Him man may once more set out to establish in himself the divine purpose. Henceforth the only genuine human life is the Christian life—the only genuine social order is that which is modelled on the teachings of the Master. The doctrine of Christ calls men to a definite scheme of social and individual life which is possible through divine grace, which is abundantly bestowed. This scheme of life must of necessity, since it is divine, bring men to the highest possible point of human development, and it alone is capable of accomplishing this. There is but one source of Redemption—Christ. To neglect this source must plunge mankind into vicious excess and brutalize all human institutions. Nations must rise or fall through their attitude to Christianity.

If we look on human life, as restored through the redeeming power of Christ, we understand that this

earthly life is not an end in itself but, through the power of grace, a preparation for, and a prelude to, an everlasting life of glory in Heaven. Yet this life, though supernaturalized, loses none of what we may call its naturalness. Man has to live here below in the body, which, as well as the soul, is designed by God. For the sustenance of this body God has provided the fullness of His earthly creation. Christ does indeed command us to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven, but adds that those other things which are necessary for man's temporal life will also be added. In Christ we learn the order of divine and human values. Far from disdaining the things of the body, He assumed a body which required sustenance even as ours, and which became the instrument of our Redemption.

To appreciate the general purpose of Catholic Action, and particularly its relation to social life, it is very important that we should found all our considerations on Redemption through the Sacred Humanity of Christ. The purpose of Christ and of His Church must be the purpose of Catholic Action. Each generation, as it passes through time, needs to have applied to it through the Church the Redeeming grace of Christ. The restoration of all things—of every aspect of human life—in Christ is the grandest task in which man can be called to labour.

The different aspects of this purpose of Catholic

Action will in subsequent chapters be given in detail, but it is already evident that this apostolate embraces the whole of human life. Nothing that affects human life from the point of view of Redemption and Eternal Life may be passed over as unimportant. Every thing of human interest comes within this category. "Immense is the field of Catholic Action. It excludes nothing which in any way, directly or indirectly, belongs to the divine mission of the Church" (Pius X, "Il Fermo Proposito," June, 1908). "Numerous are the activities to which Catholic Action is directed. We may say that no activity, in so far as it is useful for the promotion of the Christian life, may be excluded from its programme" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

There is, of course, an ascending scale of values in the rich variety of purposes undertaken by different types of Catholic Action. First things must come first. The higher considerations must dominate and, in a certain sense, determine the inferior. Yet, it should be borne in mind that these inferior considerations, being very necessary also in human life, have their place in the apostolate. The aggregate of human needs includes provision for body as well as for soul. A healthy condition of human life from the point of view of material things, of physical fitness, of healthy surroundings, of equitable conditions of employment, of decent opportunities

of self-improvement, is also according to God's design, and must not be neglected by those who seek to restore all things in Christ. "No man," says St. Thomas, "should live in a way unfitting his human dignity" (I-II, Q. lxvi, 2). The goods of earth have their place in human existence, and, as the Angelic Doctor lays down, are aids to man in his acquisition of happiness, even of his ultimate happiness in God.

In the light of the Gospel teaching the lay apostle sets out to restore life's integrity. All is for the glory of God, the Author of Nature and of Grace. In Him and in Christ, Whom He has sent, is founded the apostle's interest and activity on behalf of human life. Life is complex in its many needs, spiritual and temporal. It is unified in the singleness of its final purpose. To that supreme purpose Catholic Action will direct human life by establishing God's claims on man by nature and by grace. In the light of that same final destiny it will determine and regulate even temporal things with a view of supplying material needs and bringing a well-ordered completeness into individual and social existence.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURAL RIGHTS OF GOD

SINCE Catholic Action has for its purpose the restoration in their integrity of Christian values, it must consider human life, which it seeks to heal, under the aspect of cold reasoning as well as in the light of Revelation. If it would convince men of the seriousness and actuality of its cause, it must be in a position to urge its claims, or, rather, the claims of the Almighty, by an appeal to sound reason as well as to revealed truth. If it would re-establish God's rights by creation and Nature it must build up a social order in keeping with Christian social philosophy.

Christian Philosophy depends on the power of natural reasoning for its conclusions, though it is immensely aided in its pursuit of knowledge by the light of Revelation. The first care of this philosophy is to establish the existence of God, the Author of Nature and Creator of the universe. This must likewise be the starting point of Catholic activity. Taking its stand on the proofs by reason of the existence of a Supreme Being from Whom

all things have come, it must proclaim the rights of such a Creator and strive by a well-aimed apostolate to establish in human society a proper order between God and His creation. The rights of God, which reason itself dictates, have been swept aside by the individualist and materialist philosophies of the last few centuries. Human society must be brought back from the abyss of misery and spiritual destitution into which its terrible denial of God has plunged it. This is the first task of Catholic Action.

“The fool hath said in his heart that there is no God.” To live godlessly is to deny one’s reason. Since man has come from God, since he owes every moment of his existence to God, to live, even in the natural order, as if there were no God, is to pervert human life. God has created with a definite purpose. He bestowed on man a specific nature for the accomplishment of this purpose. Consequently man’s chief duty and the final end of all his natural powers and inclinations must be to perfect his knowledge and service of the Divine Will. For the purposes of Catholic Action this fundamental doctrine is of supreme importance in the right ordering of social life.

Amongst the strongest of human inclinations with which God has endowed man is that of association with his fellow-men. Man by nature is a social animal. He joins with his fellow-men

and gradually builds up a social organization or state in order to enjoy what St. Thomas calls "sufficiency of human life." This sufficiency would be impossible of attainment should each individual live in a state of dull isolation from his fellow men. The knowledge which is necessary for human progress is not the monopoly of individuals, but possessed by the aggregate of human beings. Through the partnership of effort and the combining of many minds is human development assured. For this reason St. Thomas lays down that in a State different things should be done by different people. The State is an organized whole which, without injuring individuality, directs the activity of the individuals to the common good of the entire body. Reason itself impels man to form a social group, and, once formed, it directs through its power of government the activities of all towards the common good.

It is highly important to remember, however, as the Angelic Doctor points out, that the State, or "associated multitude," has no existence of its own, apart from the individual members who form it. It is but a moral person. It exists in the members, through the members and for the members who form it. It has no reason or power of reasoning of its own. It is governed and directed by the united reasons of those who compose it—that is to say, by the entire community or by its lawfully chosen

representatives who are commissioned to govern and receive authority direct from God. Modern nationalism by its statolatry sins against this primary notion of social life. For this very reason we have witnessed in recent times fierce opposition on the part of governments of Fascist tendencies to Catholic Action organizations.

Government must be for the people as a whole. If the State has no existence of its own, neither can it have any purpose apart from the general good of the entire body. "The individual," says Pope Leo XIII, "is older than the State." No State can be an end unto itself. Its end is government and the direction of the entire group towards the completest possible fulfilment of life's purpose. How, then, can a State be Godless? How can it, any more than the individuals who form it, deny God's place in human life? "Nature and reason," declares Pope Leo XIII, "which command every individual to worship God in holiness, because we belong to Him and must return to Him, since from Him we come, bind also civil society by a like law" ("Immortale Dei," November 1st, 1885).

The same Holy Pontiff sets down the philosophy governing social life. "Whatever be the nature of government, rulers must ever bear in mind that God is the paramount ruler of the world, and must set Him before themselves as their exemplar and law in the administration of the State. For, in

things visible, God has fashioned secondary causes, in which His divine action can in some wise be discerned, leading up to the end to which the course of the world is ever tending. In like manner, in civil society God has willed that there should be a ruling authority, and that they who are invested with it should reflect the divine power and providence in some measure over the human race. They, therefore, who rule should rule with even-handed justice, not as masters, but rather as fathers ; for the rule of God over man is most just, and is tempered always with a father's kindness. Government should, moreover, be administered for the well-being of the citizens, because they who govern possess authority solely for the welfare of the State. Furthermore, the civil power must not be subordinated to the advantage of any one individual or of some few persons, inasmuch as it was established for the common good of all " (*ibid.*).

Social Order, with its high ideal of the common good, is but a particular aspect of the universal order which the Divine Wisdom established in the Universe. Sociology is but a chapter of an immense Cosmology, of the great book of Divine ordinance and providence of God. All things created must be governed by the law of the Creator. God in His goodness has placed the earth and its fullness in the hands of man, whom He has made to His own image and likeness by the endowment of

reason and will. Man alone of all earthly creatures is autonomous and self-governing. The glory he gives to God is the glory of a free creature, intent on the fulfilment of the divine Will. This glory comes from each individual, but still more potently from the associated group. Human politics, whereby provision is made for the common good, must be a reflection of the Divine just as individual human reason should express in some way the eternal Reason of God. The State must be regarded as one dominion in the vast and providential empire established by God in the world. Under God it is appointed to the task of seeking the common good of its particular group of citizens, even as God in an infinitely higher way provides for the common good of the entire universe. Rulers are thus the vicegerents of the supreme and infinite royalty of God. They must model their social order on the providential order in God's creation.

The teaching of St. Thomas on this question is illuminating. "The entire community of the universe is governed by the Divine Reason, wherefore the very idea of the government of things in God, the Ruler of the universe, has the nature of law" (I-II, Q. xci, 1). The Angelic Doctor defines law as the "Ordinance of reason for the common good made by him who has care of the community and promulgated" (I-II, Q. xc, 4). Above all created reason towers the infinite Reason, and above

all human law the supreme divine law. In this divine reason of God are contained all things possible and created. It is truth itself and the origin of all things that are true. The creation of the world and of all things outside God is but the externalizing in time of the divine plan eternally conceived in the Divine Mind. Consequently God's eternal law, which rules and shaped the universe, must be after creation still the ruling and governing power and the source of all natural and positive law. God created in order to diffuse His own infinite Good in splendid variety. But this sharing in the divine Goodness must be of necessity in accordance with the divine law of its diffusion and conservation, God is the sublime Legislator, whose rule is eternal, transcending all time and space. His law is blindly obeyed without any knowledge of its divine origin in creatures devoid of reason. In man God's law becomes a real law by being assimilated and reordained by a new reason. For this reason St. Thomas calls natural law "The participation of the eternal law in the reasonable creature" (I-II, Q. xci, 2).

The common good which is the purpose of the social order is intimately bound up in God, "Who is the common good of the whole universe and of all its parts" (cf. *Quodlib.*, I, 8, I-II, Q. xci, art. 1; and *De Reg. Princ.*, I, 15). Natural reason demands a natural subjection to this Supreme Being in

Whom is contained the common good of the State. It demands also that this sense of subjection be expressed by the State through the virtue of religion. "Human society, for which by nature we were formed, has been constituted by God the Author of Nature, and from Him, as from their principle and their source, flow in all their strength and permanence the countless benefits with which society abounds. As we are each of us admonished by the very voice of Nature to worship God in piety and holiness, as the Giver unto us of life and of all that is good therein, so also, and for the same reason, nations and States are bound to worship Him; and therefore it is clear that those who would absolve society from all religious duty act not only unjustly, but with ignorance and folly" (Leo XIII, "Humanum Genus").

To-day we witness the nations vainly endeavouring to lay permanent foundations of peace and prosperity. But never in their councils do they have recourse to these fundamental principles which reason alone could teach them. It would be the height of bad taste to mention the Ten Commandments of God in such assemblies. The League of Nations must be what the nations make it. When nations are brought back to right reason through the inculcation of the Divine and natural law, they will find a sure basis of union and of lasting harmony. To accomplish this is the first purpose of Catholic

Action. To lead the nations back to God renders Catholic Action truly a "beneficent social action," since it would reconstitute them in the only integral common good. The action of the Church becomes indeed beneficial when through its ministers and its lay-apostles it teaches men the value of spiritual things, and through its lay-apostolate permeates human institutions with the fundamental principles of right reason. It thus secures a sufficiency of life which is then only complete when the rights of man are built on the supreme rights of God. Already so productive of good, when it insists on the natural order, Catholic Action bestows a still greater boon on humanity when it inculcates the respect due by individuals and by States to the bountiful goodness of God the Author of Grace and the supernatural life.

CHAPTER III

SUPERNATURAL CLAIMS

NATURALISM is the greatest crime of the age. It has been repeatedly condemned by successive Supreme Pontiffs during the last century. It is opposed to the acceptance of a supernatural order in human affairs. In the intellectual order it is purely rationalist. In the moral order it declares for complete independence of any divine or even natural law. In the social order it is liberalist and materialist. It has made its dire influence felt in every phase of human life. It lies at the root of those diseases which now sap the real rights of the individual, the sanctity of the family, the harmony of social life. It defends its base attitude to human life openly or insidiously, in literature, in art, in the cinema and in the theatre. In proclaiming the natural it does not seek what is good in man as he was created and is now redeemed by God, but it would excuse the lowest forms of indulgence of a nature that is corrupted through the Fall. It does not seek to restore or to ennoble, but to imbed the human race even more permanently and more

deeply in a self-destroying viciousness. Its pretended ennobling of human reason has plunged the world into a dire unreasonableness. Its abandonment of the supernatural has clearly shown that even the natural law cannot be wholly observed without supernatural help.

Catholic Action seeks to bring back a de-christianized world to Christ. But, though human reason can prove the existence of a natural law, binding States as well as individuals, there is no hope of restoring the complete observance of these laws unless there be a revival of the supernatural life. The only way to ensure the vindication of what we have already described as the natural rights of God is to bring humanity once more into close touch with Divine Grace. No greater mistake could be made by those who take part in the apostolate than to regard it from a merely natural viewpoint. They must remember that Christ, Whom they seek to restore, is the very centre and source of the Supernatural order. The supreme purpose of Catholic Action must, then, be the re-establishment of that order. To that all its endeavours must be ordained. Through it alone is the apostolate rendered an essentially holy activity. An action that depends on natural forces alone, or which seeks to achieve mere temporal happiness, is not of much use to the Church, though it be mistakenly called Catholic by its promoters.

By insisting on the supernatural character of the apostolate the Church wishes to place within reach of her children who fight on her behalf not alone the supernatural purpose to be accomplished, but the assistance of a divine power to achieve it. "The moral of the crisis which confronts us," writes M. Maritain, "is self evident; it is a reminder of the exigencies of the supernatural life, an absolute affirmation of the primacy of the spiritual. . . . If the universe is not to suffer a radical disorder, the Church must lead the nations to the ultimate end of human life, which is also that of States, and must therefore, in virtue of the spiritual interests entrusted to her, direct governments and nations and bend before God the stiff necks of the powers of the flesh" ("The Things that are not Cæsar's," Sheed and Ward, pp. 78-79).

There is no merely natural end to anything in human life, whether individual or sectional. God might have left man with merely the natural faculties of mind and will to pursue an end in proportion to his native powers. Such was not His Divine Will. He decreed to raise the human to the divine by a communication of His own Nature. He established immediately with creation an intimacy of divine knowledge and love which made man a real child of God. The divine munificence poured forth on mankind a gift which no human being could ever hope for or even conceive—a life which was

infinitely above the capacity of any reason or will created or creatable. With creation our First Parents received sanctifying grace, which, with the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity, was to lead them to the Light of Glory in the Beatific Vision. Towards that supernatural end, as the only ultimate end of human life, were they and their posterity to direct henceforth all their activity. The gift bestowed on our First Parents became thus the precious heritage of all.

By the Fall man cast aside this precious gift and the heritage was lost. But not for long. Immediately in the wonderful designs of God came the promise of Redemption. A long era of darkness followed, but not devoid of hope. Through the ages of expectation man was saved through faith in the Redeemer, yet to come. On Him depended all salvation. "Oh, happy fault that has merited such a Redeemer." God's divine generosity, which shone forth in the gift, became still more resplendent in the story of its restitution. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us." The plan of Redemption is astounding. The lay apostle must never forget it. Only by complete adherence to it, by entering fully into its design, may he hope to bring back society to the feet of Christ and to the supernatural life. Redemption is entirely from Christ. He is still with us in His Church to accomplish through His grace what He came to do. "It

is a mistake," again writes M. Maritain, "to judge only according to nature. Grace is there with surprises in store. While the old world continues its downward career, the real new world is at hand, the secret invisible urge of divine sap in the mystic body which endures and grows not old, the blessed awakening of souls at the prompting of the Virgin and the Spirit" (*ibid.*, p. 101).

Through Christ we are made once again "*Consortes Divinæ Naturæ*" (Sharers in the Divine Nature). He has both healed and restored. Through grace and the virtues of the Christian life, particularly through Faith, Hope and Charity, we enter into a divine life. This supernatural life united us closely and permanently with God. "You have not received the spirit of bondage again in fear: but you have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father)" (Epistle to Romans, viii, 15). All this comes through Christ. To fail to accomplish it in ourselves is to fail utterly. There is no other destiny for man or for society except this supernatural one. It is therefore of absolute necessity in human life. Man is saved, society is saved, only through the supernatural life.

This life was made visible through the coming of the Man-God, "in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead corporeally" (Epistle to Colossians, ii, 11). He willed to ensure the continuance of the

visible giving of supernatural life by establishing on earth a visible Church. This great living organism with Christ at its head has both the responsibility and the power to bring men unto eternal life. Christ has left to it the infinite treasures of His divine grace. "Whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed also in Heaven" (Matthew, xvi, 19). The Church is the only society empowered to do this until the end of time. It is then a divine institution, the Kingdom of Christ on earth, diffusing about it a supernatural life for the building up of the Body of Christ in the triumphant Kingdom of His Father.

These considerations on the supernatural order are of the utmost importance to the lay-apostle, if he is to understand the spiritual purpose of Catholic Action. From them he must draw further conclusions which have far-reaching effects in the campaign for the establishment of a Christian social order. As already seen, man in a state of pure nature would have had to regulate his social life in keeping with the natural knowledge he possessed of his Creator so as to attain to his natural last end—the God of Nature. Under the supernatural Order human society and those responsible for its well-being must bear in mind man's supernatural destiny. The immediate task of the State is, indeed, to provide the sufficiency of material life, but it must also remember that this material life should be directed

towards attaining the higher end of the supernatural life. Seeing that it cannot supply what pertains directly to the higher order, it must keep in close touch with the society or organization divinely appointed to carry out this provision.

It is clear that between the two great societies which direct human society—the spiritual and the temporal—there should not be any opposition. Pope Leo carefully points out the respective spheres of Church and State. “The Almighty, therefore, has appointed the charge of the human race between two powers, the ecclesiastical and the civil, the one being set over divine, the other over human things. Each in its kind is supreme; each has fixed limits within which it is contained, limits which are defined by Nature and the special object of the province of each” (“*Immortale Dei*,” November 1st, 1885).

By reason of her directly supernatural end the Church must be regarded as a superior society to the State, and can by virtue of its primacy justly claim the obedience of the State in all that pertains to her own spiritual sphere of action. St. Thomas explains this relationship of the temporal to the spiritual. “The end of society must be regarded the same way as that of the individual . . . but since the individual by the practice of virtue (to which the State should direct him), is ordained to an end that is more remote than even material things or even the practice of virtue itself, and

which consists in the enjoyment of God, there must be the same final end for society as for the individual. The ultimate end of society is not, then, to live virtuously, but by virtuous living to attain to the enjoyment of God. If human nature could of its own strength attain to that end, it would pertain to the office of the State to direct men to that end. . . . The nearer does a governing power draw its subjects to their ultimate end the nobler must it be. . . . But since man cannot attain to this end of the enjoyment of God by his own strength, but by the power of God, as the Apostle says: 'The grace of God, life eternal,' it does not pertain to human government but to the divine to lead to eternal life" ("De Regimine Principum," I.C. 14).

In this divine mission of supplying not alone sufficiency but abundance of supernatural life the Church calls upon her faithful children to take part by entrusting to them a participation in the hierarchical apostolate. The purpose of Catholic Action is identical with the purpose of the Church. The Catholic life it is called upon to instal in the family and in society is the supernatural life of grace won for mankind by Jesus Christ. The aim of Catholic Social Action must be to bring society more and more into touch with this divine grace. Divine grace is required for men's actions, whether private or public. By it alone are man's actions virtuous and capable of bringing him to everlasting life.

Society or those charged with its welfare are in dire need of this saving power of the supernatural life, and must recognize its sanctifying and elevating qualities as necessary to human existence.

The most sublime work we can do for society is to increase within it Sanctifying Grace. Catholic Action may have, or seem to have, other less spiritual objects in view, but the ultimate end must ever be to restore society to the saving grace of Christ, which is alone able to heal the ravages of original sin. Thus the highest objective of the lay apostolate is the supernatural life, to be re-established as the dominating principle of all social peace and prosperity. Modern secularist ideas of neutrality, of the complete divorce of the State from the spiritual and supernatural order, established by Christ and maintained by His Church, leads to disaster for society as well as for the individual. It is the business of Catholic Action to prevent so great a disaster by an integral restoration of life in Christ.

It is this supernatural purpose which characterizes the lay apostolate as essentially a "religious activity" (Pius XI, Address to Sacred College, December 24th, 1927). It is very necessary to keep this aspect of Catholic Action in the forefront. From it flow the many other conclusions which govern the exercise of the apostolate. In the dispute with Fascist Italy the present Holy Father emphasized

the spiritual character of this Action. Referring to the wholesale seizure of properties of the Catholic Youth, he declares : " There will be found among the sequestered documents proofs and evidence literally numberless of the profound and consistent character and religious activity of Catholic Action " (" Non Abbraino Besogno," June 29th, 1931). Pius X had already pointed out the close relation between the apostolate and sanctifying grace ; " Catholic Action, by proposing to restore all things in Christ, becomes a real apostolate for the glory of Christ Himself. To carry it out rightly we must have Divine Grace " (" Il Fermo Proposito ").

Pope Pius XI leaves us in no doubt regarding the place of the supernatural in the vast field of Catholic Action. " This chosen legion of Catholics, thus united and at the disposition of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, receives its mandate from the same source from which it receives its vigorous impulse. Thus, because of its divine mandate from the Church and its hierarchical apostleship, Catholic Action will never be of a material order but spiritual ; never of a worldly order, but celestial ; never political, but religious " (letter to Cardinal Bertram). Catholic Action must be genuinely inspired by the words of the Master : " Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added unto you " (Matthew vi, 33). On the sincerity of its adherence to its fundamental purpose must

depend its usefulness in establishing material prosperity. "Such is the light of Catholic revelation that it vividly illuminates all knowledge; so great is the strength of the Gospel maxims that the precepts of the natural law find in them a surer basis and a more energetic vigour; such, in fine, is the power of truth and morality taught by Jesus Christ that even the material well-being of individuals, of the family and of human society, receive from them support and protection" (Pius X "Il Fermo Proposito").

It is the spiritual purpose which prevents Catholic Action ever identifying itself with party politics or from becoming confused with mere materialist benevolence. Before any consideration of economic social reform or of organizing for temporal benefit, the apostle must give deep thought to the primary and ultimate purpose of all Catholic Action, namely, the spiritual regeneration of human society in God through Christ and His Church. Only by a real appreciation of the spiritual and supernatural character of his apostolate will the layman ensure himself against error and render his activity genuinely social and beneficial even in the economic sense. To think otherwise is to betray the sacredness of the cause which he is called on to serve. "A noble end is that which Catholic Action can and ought to attain, in pointing out the obedience due to the laws of God and of the Church, and in keeping

itself outside of and above all political parties. Animated and sustained by such a spirit, Catholics who participate in the apostolate of the hierarchy cannot fail to promote as the ultimate end the union of all the faithful of all nations in religious and moral order, and, as its supreme end the diffusion, the defence and the practice of Christian faith and doctrine in individual, family and social life " (Pius XI, *ibid.*).

CHAPTER IV

TEMPORAL AND EARTHLY INTERESTS

“CATHOLIC Action may justly be called social, since it purposes to extend the reign of Christ” (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Bertram). This declaration of the Holy Father makes definite the mind of the Church in regard to the social character of its Catholic Action. Only in the light of the supernatural character of the apostolate can one understand its social purpose. When the Church enters the arena of social science and calls on her children to undertake a campaign for the temporal welfare of the people generally, her ultimate aim is ever the salvation of immortal souls. This higher aim does not lessen the social mission of her action. Rather does it strengthen it. The lay apostle is called upon by the very definition of Catholic Action to undertake, in its proper perspective, “the development of a healthy and beneficent social action.”

As has been already emphasized, the pursuit of its supernatural purposes makes Catholic Action a powerful factor in social prosperity. “One cannot say what true advantages are denied the nation that

finds itself outside the field of Christian charity, which could bring to it every kind of public welfare. Towards that welfare, which is the purpose of civil society, Catholic Action is directed when it commands its followers to respect legitimate authority and be obedient to the laws, to maintain and defend the fundamentals of health and happiness of peoples' integrity of life, the priority of domestic life, mutual peace of social classes ; in a word, everything that contributes to make human society peaceful and safe. It may justly be called social, seeing that it purposes to promote the reign of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and in doing so procures for society its greatest good and all the advantages which flow therefrom, especially those which are of interest to the State and are called political—that is to say, not particular or private but common to all the citizens. It must be remarked, however, that Catholic Action pursues this social utility, supremely independent of party passion as humble obedience to the laws of God and the Church demands ” (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Bertram).

The social action of the apostolate is not, however, confined to that which results from its directly spiritual activity. The Church exercises its beneficent power not alone in matters of spiritual concern, but even in material things. In these latter things she does not and cannot concern herself with the temporal as such. But her interest in all that per-

tains to the spiritual life of the soul makes her solicitous also for the goods of the body in so far as they aid or impede in the attainment of eternal life. So, in like manner, Catholic Action has the right to exercise its influence in any sphere of human life which, directly or indirectly, affects the salvation of immortal souls. Though what is purely social, economic or political is outside its ambit, yet, in so far as these things help or hinder the citizens in working out their eternal destiny, they may not be alienated from the benign influence of the apostolate. "To exclude the Church, founded by God Himself, from the business of life, from the power of making laws, from the training of youth, from domestic society, is a grave error" (Leo XIII, "Immortale Dei," November, 1885).

Pope Leo XIII shows how real is the concern of the Church for those who are the victims of a perverse social order. "The Church uses her efforts not only to enlighten the mind, but to direct by her precepts the life and conduct of all; the Church improves and betters the condition of the working man by means of numerous organizations; does her best to enlist the services of all classes in discussing and endeavouring to further in the most practical manner the interests of the working class" ("Rerum Novarum"). "Neither must it be supposed," continues the same Holy Father, "that the solicitude of the Church is so preoccupied with the

spiritual concerns of her children as to neglect their temporal and earthly interests. Her desire is that the poor, for instance, should rise above poverty and wretchedness and better their condition in life, and for this she makes a strong endeavour. By the very fact that she calls men to virtue, and forces them to its practice, she promotes this in no small degree. . . . The Church, moreover, intervenes directly on behalf of the poor by setting on foot and maintaining many associations which she knows to be efficient for the relief of poverty " (*ibid.*).

Nowadays, in particular, when the gravest issues are bound up with what is known as the social question, it is most important to emphasize the social character of the Catholic Action: "For in this very matter the salvation of souls is imperilled." "The social question still awaits its solution, but it is important that it should not be solved without the Church, lest it should be against the Church" (Benedict XV, Discourse, March 10th, 1919). "Doubtless," says Pope Leo XIII, "this most serious question demands the attention and efforts of others beside ourselves—to wit, the rulers of States, of employers of labour, of the wealthy—aye, of the working classes themselves, for whom we are pleading. But we affirm without hesitation that all the striving of men will be vain if they leave out the Church" ("Rerum Novarum"). The Church has an inalienable right to use the fullness of her

authority and the power of her apostolate in so grave an issue. Pope Pius XI leaves no room for doubt either in regard to the seriousness of the present position or the gravity of the consequences. "It may be said with truth that nowadays the conditions of social and economic life are such that vast multitudes of men can only with grave difficulty pay attention to that one thing which is necessary, namely, the salvation of their immortal souls" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

One of the gravest mistakes of many modern social reformers is to consider the present world crisis as purely economic and the much needed reform merely a question of rearrangement of production and consumption. They forget that it is above all a moral question and that no amount of, economic science or manipulation of material factors, independently of the moral virtues, can bring about the desired reform. For it is the moral virtues which regulate man's attitude to external goods and establishes harmonious relations between those who use worldly riches. "It is the opinion of some, which is caught up by the masses, that the social question, as they call it, is merely economic. The precise opposite is the truth. It is first of all moral and religious, and for that reason its solution is to be expected mainly from the moral law and the pronouncements of religion. . . . Without the instincts which the Christian religion implants and

keeps alive, without providence, self-control, thrift, endurance and other natural qualities, you may try your hardest, but prosperity you cannot provide" (Leo XIII, "Graves de Communi," January 18th, 1901).

In the light of these principles we can judge of the exact nature of the social apostolate in the campaign of Catholic Action. Its influence is genuinely social and even economic, but yet clearly distinguishable from purely political and economic activity. It is true that economics, as such, and the practical social science in Catholic Action work on the same ground, are concerned with material things, yet each views these things from a different standpoint. Economic or political action aims at temporal prosperity and peaceful social life as an end in itself. It is not concerned with higher interests. Catholic Action, on the other hand, being essentially religious likewise, seeks prosperity and happy earthly existence, but for a higher motive, namely, as a means to the complete fulfilment of man's destiny as a child of God and heir, with Christ, of eternal glory.

This aspect of Catholic Action is exceedingly important and has at times been neglected. It can never be the business of lay apostles to expend their energies in providing and maintaining powerful organizations merely for the temporal prosperity of those concerned. Catholic laymen should indeed

take their due part in the affairs of State and in the shaping of political movements, but in these things they do not act in the name or on behalf of their faith, but purely on their own individual responsibility. In the same way and for the same reason, when any group of Catholic laymen in a Catholic Action organization undertakes some scheme of economic reform and concerns itself directly with material interests for the temporal benefit of the State or of a particular class, it must take entire responsibility on its own shoulders for the success or failure of such activities. Such matters of temporal concern, though in general encouraged by the Church on behalf of social welfare, must be carried on independently of and as outside her authoritative power.

Pope Pius XI makes this important consideration quite clear. "We would remark, in order to forestall and destroy any misunderstanding, that associations which, while conforming their activity to the religious and moral programme of Catholic Action, employ this activity directly in the economic and professional domain, do alone themselves bear the responsibility of their initiative and activity in so far as they are concerned with purely economic interest, but in what is religious and moral they depend on Catholic Action, which they should serve as instruments of the apostolate. Wherefore it follows that the sacred pastors of the Church, in

accordance with their office, may not exclude such organizations from their care ; rather should they encourage them with their attentive support and vigorous encouragement, so that they may be thoroughly formed in accordance with the principles and precepts of the Christian religion. For this very reason also Catholic Action, whilst, on the one hand, it enjoys the advantages with which purely religious groups and economic associations provide it, on the other hand aids and encourages these associations by ensuring that not alone peace and benevolence but the strength of collaboration, shall reign between both one and the other " (letter to Cardinal Segura).

The field of this social activity on the part of Catholic Action is a very wide one. Wherever social conditions are found to impinge on the God-given rights of individuals and create dissatisfaction amongst the different classes of society, there must Catholic activity bring its benign influence to bear. It must strive by means of its organized charity and welfare work to alleviate suffering where it finds it ; but it must seek, above all, to re-establish equitable and just conditions by removing from the social system the root causes of misery and unrest.

The broad lines of a definitely and directly social programme of Catholic Action in the light of the foregoing principles can be found in many places throughout the papal encyclicals. Pope Pius X

speaks of the "chosen band of Catholics whose aim is to unite all their forces in order to combat anti-Christian civilization by every just and lawful means, and to repair in every way the grievous disorders that flow from it; to reinstate Jesus Christ in the family, the school and society; to re-establish the principle that human authority represents that of God; to take intimately to heart the interests of the people, especially those of the working and agricultural classes, not only by the inculcation of religion, the only true source of comfort in the sorrows of life, but also by striving to dry their tears, to soothe their sufferings, and, by wise measures, to improve their economic condition; to endeavour, consequently, to make public laws conformable to justice, to amend or suppress those which are not so; finally, with a true Catholic spirit to defend and support the rights of God in everything, and the no less sacred rights of the Church" ("Il Fermo Proposito").

Pope Pius XI. speaking on the programme of Catholic Action, leaves no doubt in regard to the activities to be undertaken by the lay apostle: "Included in the many (forms of activity) there are some particularly urgent works, corresponding to needs that are more widely and more keenly felt. Amongst these we enumerate help for the working classes, and we mean not only spiritual help, which must occupy the first place, but material assistance

by means of those institutions whose special object it is to realize the principles of justice" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

The efficacy of a general movement of the Catholic laity in this respect is beyond all doubt. It needs but the courage and unselfishness of Catholics of all classes to unite with their bishops and priests in a determined effort. How quickly would Catholic ideals become a reality in any nation were the picture of social co-operation drawn by Pope Leo XIII more widely verified: "It is with such ends in view that we see men of eminence meeting together for discussion, for the promotion of concerted action, and for practical work. Others, again, strive to unite working men of various grades into associations, help them with their advice and means, and enable them to obtain fitting and profitable employment. The bishops, on their part, bestow their ready goodwill and support; and with their approval and guidance many members of the clergy, both secular and regular, labour assiduously in behalf of the spiritual and mental interests of such associations. And there are not wanting Catholics blessed with affluence, who have, as it were, cast in their lot with the wage earners, and who have spent large sums of money in founding and widely spreading benefit and insurance societies, by means of which the working man may without difficulty acquire through his labour not only many

present advantages, but also the certainty of honourable support in days to come" ("Rerum Novarum").

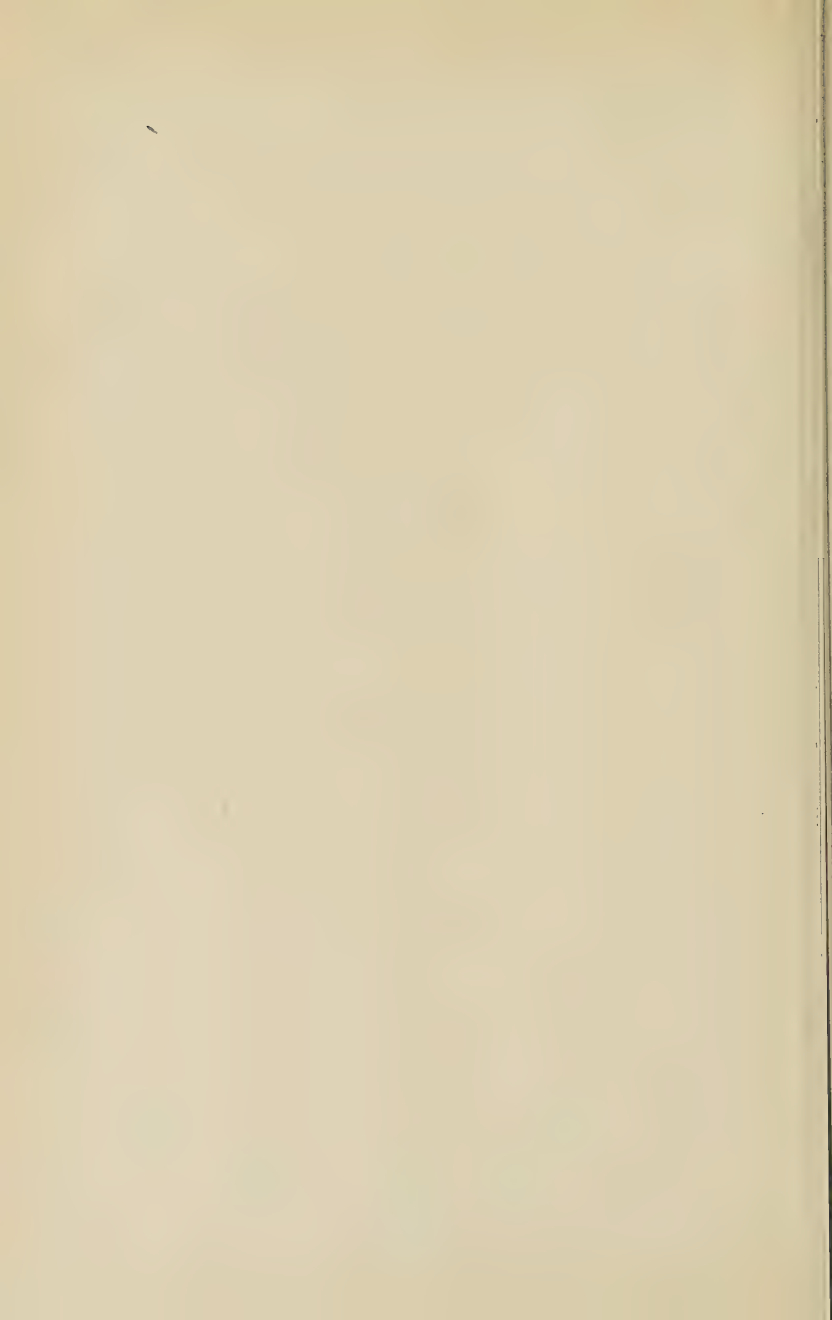
A final and important point must be emphasized in connection with the social endeavour of Catholic Action. Social and economic reform must be found within, not without, Catholic doctrines. Once these doctrines are saved there is liberty as regards the right means to be adopted. Thus on the one hand the Catholic layman must guard against proposed reforms which are nothing else but cloaked socialism. Pope Pius XI mentions in his Encyclical that there have been Catholic deserters to socialism ("Quadragesimo Anno"), and this desertion has been due at times to unwariness on the part of Catholics. "No one can be at the same time a sincere Catholic and a true socialist" (*ibid.*). On the other hand, there is wide scope within Catholic doctrine. Many reforms urgently needed have been considered socialist merely by reason of their being captured by socialist or other non-Catholic platforms, and have been too easily discarded as anti-Christian. Speaking of such reforms, Pope Pius XI declares: "Just demands and desires of this kind contain nothing opposed to Christian truth, nor are they in any sense peculiar to socialism" (*ibid.*).

Because of danger of giving mistaken support to other than truly Christian reforms Pope Pius X

drew up what he called "Fundamental Regulations of Christian Action for the People." In the matter of social reform there are twelve of these regulations which mark the bounds of what may be accepted and rejected. The first principle that must be accepted is that men, though all equal in the sight of God and in the light of their eternal destiny, yet cannot be reduced to a dead level in society, Secondly, and perhaps most important, the "inviolable right of private property" must be firmly maintained. Thirdly, no matter what system of social economics be accepted, the obligations of justice and charity must ever be the guiding and basic factors" (cf. "Fin Dalla Prima," *Motu Proprio*, December 18th, 1903).

PART IV

PREPARATION FOR THE APOSTOLATE



CHAPTER I

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

THE appeal for Catholic Action is indeed, as has been seen, universal. No one is excluded from taking part. The special grace to defend the faith is given to all through Confirmation. Yet the very nature of the organized Apostolate supposes certain conditions. "Before everything," declares Pope Pius X, "people must be thoroughly convinced that an instrument is useless if it is not suited to the work it has to do" ("Il Fermo Proposito"). For this reason, though all are called, the response on the part of the laity demands preparation and a realization of the special character of the Mission with which they are entrusted. The consequences of the essentially supernatural purpose of Catholic Action must first of all be clearly understood. "Only when we have formed Jesus Christ within us shall we more easily be able to give Him back to the family and to Society" (Pius X, *ibid.*). For this reason the present Holy Father, in order to ensure safe beginnings, says: "We think it most desirable, especially in the early stages, that

more attention should be paid to quality than to the number of soldiers in that army of Christ, and that by means of diligent and thorough formation, which will not be only religious and moral but apostolic, they will be rendered active and generous auxiliaries of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

Catholic Action must be personal before it can become social. This personal action or rigid application to one's own life is the primary and chief, though not the only objective. It is a genuine apostolate (letter to Cardinal Bertram). But its apostolic character begins only when the Apostle is really and genuinely constituted. The interior dispositions required for this formation are enumerated and emphasized by Pope Pius X. "All, therefore, who are called upon to direct, or who devote themselves to the promotion of the Catholic movement, ought to be Catholics who are proof against everything, firm in faith, solidly instructed in religious matters, truly submissive to the Church . . . they ought to be men of real piety, of manly virtue, and of a life so chaste and stainless that they are an efficacious example to all" ("Il Fermo Proposito"). Pope Pius XI, speaking of the extension of the Apostolic spirit, shows how directly personal piety enters in Catholic Action: "There is . . . fervent zeal shown in prayer and in the example of a good life, in good works spoken or

written, in works of charity of every sort, by which both in the hearts of individuals, in the homes and in the community, due love, worship and dominion may be restored to the Sacred Heart of Christ the King. This is the 'good fight,' the battle undertaken and engaged on many sides to gain for the family and the Church the rights due to them by nature, and given them by Almighty God in the schools for the education of children. In this is included everything . . . comprised under the name of 'Catholic Action' " ("Ubi Arcano," 1922).

It may be said that Catholic Action, at least apart from organized activity through an association, is already begun by the individual Catholic, who with inner piety and sincerity practises his religion. The light of a good life cannot remain hidden. It radiates around it a divine refulgence which cannot fail to attract other souls to God, or at least win their respect. "The necessary characteristic of members of Catholic activity should be the public manifestation of their faith by holiness of life, uprightness of conduct and a scrupulous observance of the laws of God and of the Church; and this because it is the duty of every Christian, and also in order that he, who is on the contrary part, may be afraid, having no evil to say of us" (Pius X, "Motu Proprio," December, 1903).

The effect of this inner life will show itself not alone in the result of action undertaken, but even

in the spirit of perseverance of the lay apostle. There is an everyday experience of those who have taken part in the direction of the Apostolate of Catholic Action. It often happens that some, struck by the novelty of what is proposed, or attracted because of recreational or other material advantages which are afforded by a Catholic organization, but who have little or no spiritual formation, very soon grow tired of any continued effort, or of unselfish giving of themselves. Such as these may even destroy by their selfishness what would otherwise be successful. Not infrequently they bring discredit on Catholic movements, which people judge according to the spirit of the individuals they know to belong to it.

This destructive effect of the absence of a well-ordered spiritual life has been clearly indicated by Pope Pius X. "If the soul is not thus regulated, not only will it be difficult to stir others to good, but almost impossible to act with a right intention, and strength will fail for bearing perseveringly the weariness which every apostolate brings with it, the calumnies of enemies, the coldness and want of help from men good in themselves, sometimes the jealousy of friends and fellow-workers, excusable, doubtless, on account of the weakness of human nature, but very harmful and a cause of discord, offence and quarrels. Virtue, patient and strong, and at the same time sweet and tender, is alone able

to remove or lessen these difficulties in such a way that the work to which Catholic energies are devoted may not be compromised " (*"Il Fermo Proposito"*).

The supernatural virtue of Charity must form the impulse to Catholic activity. It alone gives the apostle the necessary vitality suitable to the supernatural purpose of what he has undertaken. It stabilizes him first of all in God as the supreme good, from Whom all things have come, and to Whom all things must return. This love of God is reflected back to God's creatures. The Apostle must indeed love his neighbour's for God's sake, because in them he sees God's goodness shared through Creation and Redemption; even those who do evil must be included in this love, for no matter how low man falls he may rise through God's help and show forth again God's goodness in himself. From this comes to the Apostle the zeal for God's good in the neighbour. Naturally the greater the love of God which abides in the Apostle, the more readily will he devote himself to forward God's cause in the world around him. No matter what service is demanded, no matter what action is exercised, the motive is ever God, the incentive His Love.

Without this upright and radical intention neither God nor the neighbour will be served aright. Philanthropy, which is a modern word for social

work, though it means a love of mankind, has no motive beyond the creature whom it benefits, or the material boon it confers. Too often it is inspired solely by self-love. It is very far removed from real Christian Charity. Hence not infrequently we witness the social anomaly of wealthy industrialists, whose workers are ground down by inhuman conditions and barely manage to exist on a starvation-level wage, bestowing large sums of money which have been kept back from the labourers on some philanthropic institution. They are hailed by men as public benefactors, but God, who listens to the cry of the oppressed, will judge their actions in their true light. How different is this self-seeking from the charitably inspired activity of Catholic Action! "The true Apostle ought to become all things to all men, to save all. Like our Divine Redeemer, he ought to be moved with compassion, seeing the multitudes distressed, lying like sheep that have no shepherd" (Pius X, *ibid.*).

This Charity is the root of all the other virtues mentioned by the Supreme Pontiffs as necessary adjuncts to preparation for the lay-apostolic life. It alone can bestow "the profoundly Christian formation of its members, that is to say, a solid piety, a great moral purity, an unlimited devotion to Pope and Bishops, an ardent and active zeal" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Segura).

Yet another Christian virtue is intimately con-

nected with this formation. As Charity lies at the root of the necessary spiritual formation, so Justice lies at the root of an equally necessary moral and social formation. Charity does indeed include and complete Justice, but, since the social character of Catholic Action is concerned very closely with the real rights of man, special attention must be given to the consideration of social justice. The immense evils that surround us are due to the abandonment of justice. Charity has so far disappeared that there is not sufficient of it to lift men out of the injustice of their dealings with their fellow men. Under Charity there is a free giving of what is our own; justice imperatively commands that we give others what is theirs, and to which we, consequently, have no right. If each individual and every class received only what was their due, though Charity would still be necessary, yet how different would be the social conditions of our time.

The relation between Justice and Charity is pointed out by Pope Pius XI. "Clearly, Charity cannot take the place of Justice unfairly withheld. But, even though a state of things be pictured in which every man receives at last all that is his due, a wide field will nevertheless remain open for charity. For justice alone, even though most faithfully observed, can remove the cause of social strife, but can never bring about a union of hearts and minds" ("Quadragesimo Anna").

One of the main aims of the Catholic Apostle is to "fight for justice." He must "thirst after justice." He must ardently desire it to reign. But that reign must begin in and dominate his own life. Grave mistrust in Catholic Action, not to say scandal, has been occasioned by some who have entered with unclean hands into the sacred arena of the Catholic Apostolate. It has happened that a few who have loudly proclaimed the need of Christian Social Reform have failed to set their own house in order. Ill-paid employees are weakened in their faith by the manifest insincerity and hypocrisy of an employer's empty protestations of Catholicity. The Holy Father refers to this in stern words : "Catholic Action, moreover, will make impossible that hideous phenomenon, most monstrous but not infrequent, in which men who profess themselves Catholics have one conscience for their private life and another conscience for their public life" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Cerejeira). For this reason also Pius X points out that it is not alone the goodness and justice of the Christian principles in themselves, but "the strict morality which Catholics profess, their entire disinterestedness in personal matters, the frankness and sincerity with which they seek only the true, solid and highest good of their neighbours, which makes an impression on the mind and heart of all who listen to them, and swells their ranks in such a way as to form a

solid and compact body, capable of vigorously resisting the contrary current and of commanding the respect of hostile parties " (*"Il Fermo Proposito"*).

With Charity and Justice as incentives there will follow zeal—not the zeal of the moment, but one which is determined to persevere all the time. Many begin, but few are willing to carry on in spite of the obstacles. Failure comes from the lack of appreciation of the grandeur of the task that is undertaken, or from the want of generosity to give oneself. But few are interested in the injustices which abound, provided their own lives are not affected. The multitude, in filthy slums, fainting from hunger, the children so cruelly deprived of life's just opportunities may bring words of commiseration; but how few are prepared to forsake their personal comfort to make life for them less cruel! Yet without this reaction to injustice, through a sincere sense of justice, Catholic Action cannot prevail. On the other hand, once the lay-apostle is moved by a realization of the evils that surround him, and realizes that he can do his share to remove causes of social distress, no obstacles will prevent him from making an effort to re-establish Christian civilization; no opposition, no amount of failure, no desertion on the part of fellow-workers, will deter him from persevering. If the work is of God and for God, there is bound to be great

opposition. It could never succeed otherwise. "Patience hath a perfect work."

The virtue of Charity and zeal for Justice bestows on the lay-apostle that wideness of outlook which refuses to be cramped by petty considerations or baulked by the inevitable smallness which every manifestation of greatness seems to evoke. These two fundamental virtues bring into play a great power of cohesion. For if the normal man can be made to grasp the big things, he will not be deterred from their pursuit by the little things that bestrew the path towards their accomplishment. It is sad to witness the palsy of effort through petty dissensions amongst Catholic workers who lack that Charity which "seeketh not its own." Without real Charity, a group, be it ever so enthusiastic in the beginning, will not long maintain that agreement in purpose which, as Pope Pius XI points out, "constitutes a necessary preliminary for the success of all the tasks of Catholic Action" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

"Honour, then, to them who shrink not from entering the arena, as often as need calls, believing and being convinced that the violence of injustice will be brought to an end and finally give way to the sanctity of right and religion!" (Leo XII., "Sapientæ Christianiæ, January, 1890.) Pope Pius XI sums up the need of the virtues we have mentioned. "It is particularly necessary, however,

that they whom you specially select and devote to this work should show themselves endowed with a keen sense of justice, ready to oppose with real manly constancy unjust claims and unjust actions ; that they should avoid every extreme with consummate prudence and discretion ; above all, that they should be thoroughly imbued with the Charity of Christ, which alone has power to incline men's hearts and wills firmly and gently to the laws of equity and justice. This course, already productive of success in the past, we must follow now with alacrity " (" Quadregesimo Anno ").

CHAPTER II

INTELLECTUAL TRAINING

CATHOLIC Action relies, as we have seen, on the sacred character of the Sacrament of Confirmation, whereby the Christian is rendered *ex officio* a defender of the Faith. This, it will be readily accepted, is a very serious vocation not to be entered into lightly or without due preparation. Since it is a participation in the Hierarchical Apostolate, its requirements must be in some way akin to what is demanded of the Hierarchy, who are chosen and set apart by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church. The members of a Catholic Action Association would gravely err should they consider that they were fit instruments had they but a hazy idea of the nature of the work to which they are called. The lay-apostle, having verified in himself the personal and spiritual requirements, must be ready for a further preparation which is very closely connected with the virtue of Faith. Since the purpose of Catholic Action is to instal Catholic life or a life founded on the principles of the Gospel, in the family and in society, it is evident that a profound

knowledge of the things of the Faith and of their bearing on family and social life must be the basis of all Catholic Activity.

The first duty in this necessary intellectual formation is to strengthen the Faith by a study of the doctrine it teaches, and of the chief lines of defence against the attacks of unbelievers. If it is the duty of every Catholic to show forth reasons for the Faith that is in him, the lay apostle would certainly be failing in his vocation were he to neglect this very essential preparation for Catholic Action. Pope Leo XIII mentions this as one of the duties of the Christian life. His words have an added force for the lay apostle. "Under such evil circumstances therefore each one is bound in conscience to watch over himself, taking all means possible to preserve the faith inviolate in the depths of his soul, avoiding all risks, and arming himself on all occasions, especially against the various specious sophisms rife amongst non-believers. In order to safeguard this virtue of faith in its integrity, We declare it to be very profitable and consistent with the requirements of the time, that each one, according to the measure of his capacity and intelligence, should make a deep study of Christian doctrine and imbue his mind with as perfect a knowledge as may be of those matters that are interwoven with religion and lie within the scope of reason. And, as it is necessary that faith should not only

abide untarnished in the soul, but should grow with ever painstaking increase, the suppliant and humble entreaty of the apostles ought constantly to be addressed to God : ‘ Increase our Faith ’ ” (“ *Sapientia Christiana*,” January, 1890).

Defence of the Dogmas of the Catholic Faith demands a knowledge of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ. Though these Dogmas are mysteries which we cannot understand, yet it can be shown that their acceptance, through faith, is in no sense unreasonable. In fact, no argument can be proposed against them which cannot be shown to be itself unreasonable. Our Catholic Faith, though beyond human understanding, is yet impregnable in its truth. To preserve this truth intact, to defend it against attack, to spread its life-giving light, is the task of Christ’s Church, in which the layman is called to participate. “ Since faith is necessary for salvation, it follows that the word of Christ must be preached. This office, indeed, of preaching—that is, of teaching—lies by divine right in the province of the Pastor. . . . No one, however, must entertain the notion that private individuals are prevented from taking some active part in the duty of teaching, especially those on whom God has bestowed gifts of mind with the strong wish of rendering themselves useful ” (Leo XIII, “ *Sapientia Christiana* ”). The zeal to render one’s self useful is clearly not sufficient. Catholic

Action is a definite vocation, in a very real sense a profession, and like every profession it requires a technical training, which the lay apostle must receive not in any haphazard way, but on definite lines and from a competent source.

It is of the utmost importance that this training should be properly directed. Not alone the activity, but the preparation, must be under ecclesiastical control. The lay apostles must look for this training from competent authority. The providing of it, declares Pope Pius XI, must be the first care of the priestly promoters of Catholic Action. "First of all We exhort you to undertake with all diligence the forming and developing of the minds of those who wish to fight in the ranks of Catholic Action ; for the training of those in religious, moral and social science is absolutely necessary for the efficient working of the apostolate in this age. Wherefore for a beginning huge massed crowds of the faithful are not to be selected but rather some small cohorts who, formed in doctrine and in experience, affect and uplift by the strength of the Gospel leaven the entire mass " (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Leme de Silviera Centra, Archbishop of Rio Janeiro, October 27, 1935).

Many mistakes have been made through mistaken and unformed zeal. Pope Leo XIII speaks of those who " make it a matter of guesswork as to whether they are for the Church or against her, since, on the

one hand, they give themselves as professing the Catholic faith, and yet wish that the Church should allow certain opinions, at variance with her teaching, to be spread abroad with impunity" (*ibid.*). Far from being trained and accepting a formation with docility from a competent source, such as these "would fain see the Church's mode of action influenced by their ideas and their judgment to such an extent that everything done otherwise they take ill, or accept with repugnance" (*ibid.*).

Our Catholic Faith does not remain in the realms of Dogma. From these very mysteries there springs a rule of life, a moral code, whereby our conduct is guided. God reveals Himself to us that we may, by our enlightened and supernatural living, return to Him as to the source of all life and holiness. This return is governed by the moral order. "To fix the gaze on God and to aim earnestly at becoming like Him is the supreme law of the life of man. For we were created in the divine image and likeness, and are vehemently urged by our very nature to return to Him from Whom we have our origin. But not by bodily motion or effort do we make advance towards God, but through acts of the soul, that is, through knowledge and love" (*ibid.*).

The object of Catholic Action is to instal Catholic life in the family and in society. The well ordering of these two groups is maintained by the moral law which results from the Faith. The Ten Com-

mandments, the teaching and principles of Christ, the decisions and explanation of the Church, are meant to guide all human affairs, whether of the individual or the group. The general principles of Catholic ethics are clear and based on certain foundations of revealed truth. The application of these principles to the various and ever-changing contingencies of human life requires deep thought. The more one gets away from first principles in the moral order, which govern human conduct, the more difficult becomes their application. In this does the practical reason differ from the merely speculative. "For, since the speculative reason is busied chiefly with necessary things which cannot be otherwise than they are, its proper conclusions, like universal principles, contain the truth without fail. The practical reason, on the other hand, is busied with contingent matters, about which human actions are concerned : and consequently, although there is necessity in the general principles, the more we descend to matters of detail, the more frequently we encounter defects " (Ia, IIae, Q. 94, art. 4).

Catholic Social Philosophy is a very exact science. It has very definite principles from which it judges of the good or evil of social institutions. It contains all that is contained in the modern word "Sociology." At times it deals simply with the basic principles of human society—its rights as compared with the rights of the individual and the

family ; its duties of providing for the common good ; its relation to the higher and more perfect spiritual society of the Church. Then come the rights of the members of the State one with another. In all these questions principles of Catholic Social Science are involved. But at times Catholic Sociology must discuss the justice and rectitude of things that seem at first sight purely economic questions, such as joint-stock companies, market fluctuations, production, consumption, credit, etc. In such questions it is not easy to judge with complete exactitude.

One may deplore indeed abuses of certain systems, but not every social institution is to be discarded because it has been abused by certain unscrupulous individuals. Again, one may think that a certain method of conducting social affairs is not for the common good, but to bring about a change would entail an upheaval which might disturb the whole economic system and entail a general injustice far in excess of the justice it seeks. Pope Pius XI, for example, lays down the right of the worker to receive a family wage, but the bringing of this principle into effect may not be possible immediately in certain concerns, owing to the circumstances that prevail. While calling on the State to introduce speedy reforms, he admits that many other considerations must be taken into account before one can accuse any individual em-

ployer of injustice. "It is unjust to demand wages so high that the employers cannot pay them without ruin and without consequent distress amongst the working people themselves" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

The promotion of Catholic thought and subsequent Catholic Action clearly demands a knowledge of the system of Catholic Social Science. Apart from formation on the principles of the Natural and Divine Positive Law, the lay-apostle must be able to form some judgment of the social system that prevails, be able to point out wherein it is unjust, and be in a position to indicate at least the general lines of Catholic Social Reform. Thoughtfulness must be the keynote of those who are engaged in Catholic Activity. According to different necessities, different aspects of Catholic Action will be undertaken by different associations. It is of the utmost importance that each phase of this action, no matter how confined, be conducted by trained and enlightened workers. It is, particularly, because of this need of intellectual formation, that the priest is called upon to take his part and become the leader *par excellence*. His training for many years makes Catholic principles familiar. Leadership in thought is his profession. There is no freedom of choice in the matter. The Holy Father has repeatedly commanded it. "It is your chief duty, Venerable Brethren, and that of your clergy, to seek diligently,

to select prudently and train fittingly these lay-apostles amongst working men and amongst employers. No easy task is here imposed upon the clergy, wherefore all candidates for the sacred priesthood must be adequately prepared to meet it by intense study of social matters " (*ibid.*).

In seeking an intellectual formation there are two dangers to be avoided, both of which are removed by the presence of a competent teacher, such as the priest is by nature of his calling. In the first place, independence of thought can be excessive if uncontrolled. It is often recommended that we should try and think for ourselves. That is right, if we are properly taught how to think for ourselves. Such a teaching implies, first of all, a master upon whom we can rely; and secondly, a foundation of impregnable principles on which we can fall back when in doubt.

As regards the necessity of a master to guide us, St. Thomas is quite clear. One can learn certain things without the aid of a master, but a science is not acquired, an education is not completed without the aid of Masters. Nobody is a master to himself no matter what genius he may possess. Genius abandoned to itself is rich in mistakes as well as in discoveries. Even genius finds it necessary to have men with sure methods and methodical studies. It requires masters for its full expansion. The principle of autonomy should be completed by the

principle of authority. That is necessary, that is normal in the apprenticeship of science and art (cf. "De Veritate, Quest. XI, Art. 2).

From the teacher, chiefly, are received those sound principles on which both theory and practice may be built. Thus is avoided the second danger to right intellectual formation. Many begin and read from all sources, good and bad. They hasten to know error before being completely grounded in the truth. It is true that the ambition of the lay-apostle must be to confute error, but that does not permit him to blunder about in the darkness without the lamp of truth to guide him. Truth possessed permits one to study error with impunity, whereas familiarity with error without truth simply makes the future acquisition of truth very difficult, if not impossible.

CHAPTER III

THE STUDY CIRCLE

THE most efficient means of providing a sound training in Catholic principles and of insuring the necessary quality which, as Pope Pius XI points out, is more important than quantity in Catholic Action, is the Study Circle. "We earnestly exhort in the Lord," says the same Holy Father, "the beloved sons who are chosen for this task to devote themselves wholeheartedly to the formation of men entrusted to them. In the execution of this most priestly and apostolic work, let them make opportune use of the powerful resources of Christian training, by instructing youth, by founding Christian associations, by forming Study Circles on Christian lines" (*ibid.*). Indeed, one has to have experience of such an institution as the "Study Circle on Christian lines ; to appreciate its advantages. It provides a perfect and, one may add, a pleasant instrument of Catholic formation. Though the responsibility of Study Circles may seem formidable, a first principle of their formation is the realization that they present little difficulty once they are

begun. If that fact were realized half the opposition would be overcome. The number who wish to know more of Catholic social principles, and who would, if given incentive, willingly aid the Church in her effort to establish a Christian civilization, is far greater than is imagined. Get a vital Study Circle going, and the difficulty will be to keep the membership within bounds to secure its efficiency.

Given a well-trained leader who can make the hour or two hours of discussion interesting and practical, and there is no difficulty about starting and maintaining a Study Circle. Under that efficient guiding hand good fellowship, enthusiasm and method will accomplish all that is required. There is no need of any grandiose beginnings or spectacular proceedings. A few earnest souls meeting in a quiet room to discuss definite subjects of Catholic interest have formed a nucleus of thoughtfulness whose power can be measured only in time. It is no longer a question of one individual thinking out Catholic things. Catholic thought has become grouped, and from the union of many minds springs a great influence.

There need be no mystery about Study Circles. Their name explains their nature and their organization. They are called Study Circles because study is the object of the members who form them. Each group is called a Circle because the members, by their association in thought and ideas, co-operate

and aid one another and the whole body towards a fuller knowledge of the question at issue.

It is quite clear that the first essential of such a group is study. Without that there can be no progress, no intellectual development, no thoughtful action. How few really know what study properly means ! It implies application of the mind to some truth with the purpose of retaining knowledge of it. The group, wishing to form a Study Circle, must be ready to do this. Let them remember that the study is not done at the meeting, but prior to it. The meeting is not the time for study, but for co-ordinating, checking and directing the ideas that have already been acquired. Every member of the circle must be prepared to devote some of his time during the week to study, not to mere reading, but to applying his mind so that the knowledge he acquires may be used for the benefit of all at the time of the weekly meeting. No member who is not fully prepared to do this should join a Study Circle. He will be a drag instead of a help.

Given the first essential—the zeal to study—the second element follows very simply. The circle entails a communication of ideas. At the meeting, under the direction of the leader of studies, each member first of all learns to express his ideas before his brothers in a homely atmosphere. The bashfulness which keeps many of our young men from

defending Catholic principles thus gradually disappears. Again, it is easy to make mistakes; the individual member who studies hard requires a guide. Discussion, especially when directed by a formed leader, will clarify ideas and develop the truth perhaps only partly possessed. The main purpose of the meeting is to make ideas circulate, bring theories into touch with practice and, if necessary, formulate a scheme of action. Once this is done, let rules for study circles take care of themselves. The fewer rules laid down the better.

Every study circle must have a leader. That at least is essential. On the leader depends the success of the circle. If a priest leader can be obtained half the battle is won. His duty is to direct the study, both as regards material and method, and through the ensuing discussions reap the greatest possible fruit for the circle. He is not a lecturer, nor should he dominate the proceedings. Provided the end is being attained he will do far more good as a sympathetic listener, ready to help in difficulties should appeal be made to him. The study circle is a little family meeting of brothers united in a high objective. The leader must cherish and develop the spirit of friendliness by regarding himself not as a task-master, but as a brother appointed to help his brothers. In consultation with the others, let him choose a text-book or text-books, and let him arrange the subject for study each week. This can

be done either by following the book page by page or by choosing certain subjects for study—one week, for instance, family wage; another week, trade unions or unemployment, etc. If this latter method is chosen, books dealing with the subjects should be at hand, and the leader should inform the circle as to where they will find material for the study of any particular question. It is well that the circle should have at least a small library of its own. If each member bought a book each year, much could be achieved in this way. On the leader would depend the choice of books.

It is well to divide the work of the circle as much as possible so as to keep up the interest of all. Such offices as vice-leader, ssecretary, treasurer, librarian, etc., can be filled by common consent as required. The main thing is to get the work done efficiently.

A study circle is neither a formal debating society nor a class. Its chief characteristic is lack of formality. Special speakers may be appointed to deal with special subjects, but only with a view to promoting general discussion. As soon as such discussion is aroused, the meeting will go on almost automatically. There is no need to have remarks addressed to the leader as chairman, except in case of appeal; nor need the members stand while speaking. A cross-fire of argument is powerful in enlivening the circle, and the leader should

interfere only to bring speakers back to the point at issue, or to elucidate with a view to clarifying ideas.

The very material aspect of a circle it is also well to maintain. There are no back benches in a well-run study circle. Twenty or so good students arranged around a fire in a homely atmosphere can provide an entertainment for a night which must be experienced to be appreciated. The remark is not infrequently heard in a study circle : " Who would waste time at the pictures when a night like this is possible ? " There need be no compulsion on any member to express his mind, but every encouragement should be given to the timid. Some, indeed, join on the condition that they will not be asked to speak. Let them come in by all means, and the homely atmosphere and general spirit of their companions soon conquer the silence of even the shyest. Some evening they will spontaneously and without the slightest self-consciousness take part in the general discussion.

Though lack of formality is a great help to a study circle, yet abuses of it must be prevented. The leader should necessarily direct, and his directions must be received. Without discipline there can be no progress. The self-opinionated member who has joined for the purpose of airing his views and voicing his grievances is a heavy cross which may endanger the very life of the circle. Informality

should develop self, but not selfishness. Each member should strive to advance the discussion, not to retard it. "In English study circles," says Henry Somerville, "one of the recognized bores is the member, generally elderly, who always wants to be giving lengthy illustrations from his own experiences of the truth of some trite dictum" ("The Catholic Social Movement," p. 135). There are many other types of bores. Some of them are perverse; some of them are just ignorant and do not realize it. Who has not met the gentleman whom no amount of argument will convince, who will never keep to one point, but dodges from one thing to another until confusion reigns? The leader must quietly insist on such as these learning to argue in the right way, by pointing out to them the injury they will do the circle by such obstinacy in their opinions and want of order in their ideas. Blessed is the leader who can be firm yet patient. As regards the direct result of the study circle, the practical issue must always be kept before the members. A study circle is not meant to bestow a personal delectation in newly acquired ideas, a kind of intellectual luxury. The study circle of which we speak is a social institution for the purpose of Catholic Action. Its main purpose must be to develop a social sense, a zeal in the welfare of the society in which the members live. "The greatest impediment to the enthusiasm of a study circle,"

says a French writer, "the thing that paralyzes its efforts, is the too great absorption in mere theories and speculations. Mere ideas, and not facts, occupy attention. Subjects are chosen which, because they are too general, too vague, and out of touch with life, are lacking in interest to the members. Certainly there must be speculative study in the circle, but such study is useful only to the extent to which it is brought down to earth, taken from the realm of the intellectual and applied to the realm of reality. Does it suffice in a study circle to examine, say, the question of property in itself, without taking into account the social circumstances of those to whom the question is proposed? Evidently no; for, the principles being fully established, we must descend to facts and find out what is the condition of property in the district, what is the state of the question in the village or in the country" (M. Fr. Veuillot, "Le Mouvement d'Education Populaire," Les Conférences, 1906).

The counsel given by St. Thomas to a young student is helpful in determining the character of mental effort in a study circle. "You ask me what is the real way to succeed in your studies and attain safely to wisdom. The counsel I give you is not to begin right off with difficult questions, but to work towards them by degrees. The knowledge of the simpler truths will lead you to the more profound" (cf. "Monita et Preces," Ed. Dr. Esser,

O.P., 1890). To bring untrained minds into touch immediately with abstruse principles of philosophy, social or otherwise, is simply to bewilder them and impede their perseverance. It is far better to rivet their attention to actual questions of practical issue, and thus work their minds up to the consideration of the principles which govern the solution of the difficulties of the hour.

The choice of a text-book should be governed by the rules that govern the nature of the proposed study. Here also the financial situation needs attention. There is little use in proposing very expensive works as text-books to a circle composed of working men. Fortunately expense in this respect is not required. Brochures dealing with special and general questions of social science may be purchased very cheaply and provide excellent text-books.

The best material for study will be found in the Papal Encyclicals. There the student comes into touch directly with very actual questions of tremendous import to society. He is immediately in contact with the living voice of the Church. He is provided with an authority which of itself brings conviction and satisfaction. "It belongs to the Pope to judge authoritatively what things the Sacred Oracles contain, as well as what doctrines are in harmony, and what in disagreement with them, and also, for the same reason, to show forth what things are to be accepted as right, and what

to be rejected as worthless, what it is necessary to do, and what to avoid doing in order to attain to eternal salvation" (Pope Leo XIII, "Sapientiæ Christianæ," January, 1890). The Supreme Pontiffs' sole purpose in their Encyclicals is to lay down the principles and provide a sure guide for the bringing of human life, with its varied difficulties, into touch with Revelation. "In this," says Pope Leo, "lies the sole means of freeing us from the ills now weighing us down, of forestalling the dangers now threatening the world. For the accomplishment of this end, Venerable Brothers, We must bring to bear all the activity and diligence within our power" (*ibid.*).

The result of Pope Leo's anxiety and diligence, especially through his Encyclical "Rerum Novarum," the great Catholic Charter of the social question, have been made manifest in the course of the last forty years. The "Rerum Novarum" is still a document of supreme importance. It provides a sure text-book for a study circle. If students could be brought to a complete understanding of, not alone the written work, but the import in human life of the teaching of Pope Leo, their training would be practically complete. This Encyclical coupled with its complement, the "Quadragesimo Anno" of Pope Pius XI, provides both principle and application. Never for a moment is either of them out of touch with life.

To these two encyclicals in particular—indeed, to every Papal pronouncement in reference to the Social Question—we may apply the words of Pope Pius XI in the “*Quadragesimo Anno*,” concerning the “*Rerum Novarum*.” “The Supreme Pontiff approached the subject in the exercise of his manifest rights, deeply conscious that he was the chief guardian of religion and the chief dispenser of all that closely appertains to it; for the question at issue was one to which no solution could be found apart from the intervention of religion and of the Church. Basing his doctrine solely upon the unchangeable principles drawn from right reason and divine revelation, he indicated and proclaimed with confidence, and as one having power, the relative rights and mutual duties of the rich and of the poor, of Capital and of Labour, and at the same time the part that was to be taken by the Church, by the State and by persons immediately concerned.” “We desire,” declared Pope Benedict XV, “that this admirable document be ever kept in view and that in its light the innumerable difficulties, which the labour question presents, may be examined and solved” (*Allocutions to the Workers’ Association of St. Joachim*, May, 1919).

As regards the actual results of the study of this grand document of Catholic social teaching, Pope Leo XIII himself, writing only ten years after its publication, was able to state: “Catholics have

derived abundant profit from Our writings. They have got from them not only courage and support in carrying out excellent projects, but they have obtained the light they wanted to direct charitable endeavour into safer and more prosperous channels" ("Graves de Communi"). Already in the lifetime of Pope Leo XIII those outside the Church began to look to the Chair of Peter for direction in their increasing difficulties. "Even non-Catholics, urged by the force of Truth, have acknowledged that so much must be allowed the Church, that she shows herself careful of all classes of the Community, and especially of the very poor" (*ibid.*). This outside influence went on increasing, and its effect is described by the present Holy Father, forty years after the appearance of the Encyclical. "The doctrine of the 'Rerum Novarum' began little by little to penetrate among those also who, being outside Catholic unity, did not recognize the authority of the Church; and thus Catholic principles of Sociology became part of the intellectual heritage of the whole human race. . . . Moreover, when, after the Great War, the rulers of the leading nations wished to restore peace by an entire reform of social conditions and, among other measures, drew up principles to regulate the just rights of labour, many of their conclusions agreed so perfectly with the principles and warnings of Leo XIII as to seem expressly deduced from them. The

Encyclical 'Rerum Novarum' has become in truth a memorable document to which may be applied the words of Isaias—"A Standard set up unto the Nations" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

If such has been the influence of the Encyclical amongst non-Catholics, the faithful children of the Church have all the more reason to look to it for inspiration. It contains the foundation of really Christian civilization. "It is not surprising, therefore, that, under the teaching and guidance of the Church, many learned priests and laymen earnestly devoted themselves to the problem of elaborating social and economic science in accordance with the conditions of our age, for the chief purpose of adapting to modern needs the unchanging and unchangeable doctrine of the Church" (*ibid.*).

It would indeed be impossible to imagine a Catholic study circle in which the Papal Encyclicals did not occupy at least very considerable attention. Sound Catholic Action is impossible without a thorough acquaintance with them. There is a clear duty on the part of Catholics to strive to actualise the teachings of these Encyclicals. The part played by the study circle, as well as by other educative institutions, in this realization of Catholic social teaching is indicated by Pope Pius XI. "Christian Social Science continues to be fostered and enriched daily by the tireless efforts of those picked men whom We have named 'The Auxiliaries of the

Church.' They do not allow it to remain hidden in learned obscurity, but bring it forth into full view of public life, as is clearly shown by the valuable and well frequented courses founded in Catholic universities, academies and seminaries, by social congresses and weeks held at frequent intervals, and with gratifying success, by study circles, by sound and timely publications spread far and wide" (*ibid.*).

A final question needs to be answered. From what class should we recruit the necessary material for a study circle? The answer is evident and imperative—from all classes. As Catholic doctrine is needed in every section of society, in every profession and concern, so the study circle is above all class distinction. The idea circle would be one in which both employer and employed are grouped around a common centre of Catholic thought. In such with the representation of all interests, given the goodwill and the common purpose to forward Christian social principles, and a leader possessed of the necessary qualities, great progress could be made in breaking down the imaginary barrier which creates an unnatural class struggle and impedes Christian co-operation. Discussions in the spirit of fraternity, with cool deliberation, on principles, would be a far greater preventive of labour troubles than the conversations which sometimes take place when the storm has already burst and both sides are

embittered. A regular course in Catholic Ethics, and especially a serious study of the Encyclicals in a neutral ground such as the Church alone can provide, could not but help both sides to become, not enemies, but co-operators in a common concern. This ideal study circle would be the natural beginning of what Pope Pius XI describes as the real remedy for cruel class war. "But there can be no question of any perfect cure except the opposition be done away with, and well-ordered members of the social body come into being anew, vocational groups, namely, binding men together, not according to the position they occupy in the labour market, but according to the diverse functions which they exercise in society" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

The ideal and the practical do not always coincide. Much preparation must precede before either employers or employees generally can be convinced of the great purpose they could serve by uniting for the study of Christian principles. In the meantime the advice should be—form study circles wherever and with whatever material opportunity offers. With time and a gradual linking up of Catholic effort through organization the many study circles will coalesce and tend to a united effort on the part of all classes. From that union will come "the intimate conviction that they are members of a single family and children of the same Heavenly Father" (*ibid.*).

Pope Pius XI recognizes "the many obstacles to be overcome on either side amongst the higher classes of society and amongst the lower." He calls for leaders of Catholic thought from every class. "Undoubtedly the first and immediate Apostles of the working men must themselves be working men, while the apostles of the industrial and commercial world should themselves be employers and merchants" (*ibid.*). The apostolate of the working man in the midst of his fellow-workers is most important. The havoc of materialism finds a fertile ground amidst distress and unemployment. Hunger and bitterness drive many to seek relief in the fair, if lying, promises of the Communist. The study circle will provide a storehouse of inspiration to direct these men to Christian social reform and will dissipate the attacks of the enemy. With what strength would not the workers' Union be imbued if they went forward under the ægis of the "Rerum Novarum"? "No less praise is due to those leaders of working men's organizations who, sacrificing their own interests and anxious only for the good of their companions, strive with prudence to bring their just demands into harmony with the prosperity of their entire vocational group" (*ibid.*).

The important part to be played by those to whom education and social standing gives an added power of influence is likewise stressed by the present Holy Father. "Further, many young men, destined

soon by reason of their talents or their wealth to hold distinguished places in the foremost ranks of society, are studying social problems with growing earnestness. These youths encourage the fairest hopes that they will devote themselves wholly to social reforms " (*ibid.*). Money and social position too frequently bring utter disregard for the welfare of the poorer brethren of Christ. There is need of an apostolate among the rich. A just criticism is sometimes levelled by workers against those who demand a greater Catholic spirit in labour unions. Why not try to make our employers more Catholic? Why not induce them to study the principles of Leo XIII? Why not, indeed? On the other hand, criticism has not been wanting of study circles in which the members were mainly employed and professional men. "That is only a capitalist study circle"; which goes to show the deplorable uncertainty that prevails and the deep-rooted suspicion which lies so deeply in the heart.

The time has come when "Valiant Soldiers of Christ must strain every thew and sinew" on behalf of a Christian social order. The Holy Father appeals to the Bishops of the Church to see in this work their chief duty. Without leaders nothing can be accomplished. And leaders, though, perhaps, born and not made, are yet born untrained and will need formation such as a study circle can give. This is the meaning of the passage in the "Quadragesimo

Anno," already quoted, in which the Pope exhorts the bishops and clergy "to seek diligently, to select prudently and train fittingly these lay-apostles amongst working men and amongst employers. No easy task is here imposed upon the clergy, wherefore all candidates for the sacred priesthood must be adequately prepared to meet it by intense study of social matters." "The effort may seem hard and laborious, both for pastors and faithful, but in very truth these things are part of the Pastoral office and of Christian life" (Pius XI, "Ubi Arcano"). In this work, under the common guidance of the Hierarchical authority, there is need of the co-operation of all priests. The Holy Father looks to the religious orders especially for help in this work of formation. "There is no need for Us to speak to you at length, Venerable Brethren, of the great hope We repose in the regular clergy for the carrying out of the purpose We have put before you, for you know, as We do, what great work they do for the glory at home of the Kingdom of Christ and for its extension abroad" (*ibid.*).



PART V

THE APOSTLE'S ALLEGIANCE



CHAPTER I

THE VOICE OF AUTHORITY

CATHOLIC Action is a participation in the Apostolate committed directly and primarily by Our Divine Lord to His Apostles and their successors until the end of time. It follows, necessarily, that, being merely a participation, it must be dependent on the source in which it shares and from which it draws its power. He who allows others to share must himself retain the fullness of power. For this reason, then, the layman's activity must of necessity be totally subordinate and completely obedient to the Head, which is Christ invisible yet visible in His Vicar upon earth. There must be obedience to the Holy See as to Christ Himself. From the Primacy of the Chair of Peter comes the governing power of the Church, which in each diocese resides in the Bishop. The great body of the Bishops, with the successors of Peter at their head, form the Divine Hierarchy of the Church. In this body is the fullness of power transmitted by Jesus Christ to His Mystic Body. From this body must the mandate come. Without complete obedience to it,

whether as to the whole or to the Holy Father, or to the Bishop in his own diocese, there can be no real Catholic Action.

Pope Leo XIII sums up beautifully the position of the Hierarchy in the Church and our duty in its regard: "The administration of Christian affairs, subject to the immediate control of the Roman Pontiff, appertains to the Bishops, who, although they attain not to the summit of pontifical power, are nevertheless truly princes in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; and, as each one of them administers a particular church, *they are as Master workers in the spiritual edifice* (St. Thomas, Quodlib., I, XIV), and they have members of the clergy to share their duties and carry out their decisions. Everyone has to regulate his mode of conduct according to the constitution of the Church, which it is not in the power of any man to change. Consequently, just as in the exercise of their episcopal authority the Bishops ought to be united with the Apostolic See, so should the members of the clergy and the laity live in close union with their bishops" ("Sapientiæ Christianæ").

Catholic Action is, as has been explained, essentially supernatural. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it." The fruit of such action must ultimately depend on the spiritual force which comes from Christ above. Hence, unless there is union through the visible

head with the invisible Head, the action exercised can have no vitality. It may look the same, but it can never have the same results. "It is neither meritorious zeal nor true piety to undertake things fair and good in themselves if not approved by the lawful pastor" (Pius X, "*Fin Della Prima*," December, 1903). Pope Leo XIII appeals to the Bishops regarding lay apostles. "Do not let them be beguiled by an excessive ardour for charitable enterprise which, if it induces any relaxation of due obedience, is itself false, unproductive of solid benefit, and displeasing to God" ("*Graves De Communi*"). The same Holy Father condemns those who "take upon themselves to act a part which does not belong to them." "They would fain," he continues, "see the Church's words of action influenced by their ideas and their judgment to such an extent that everything done otherwise they take ill or accept with repugnance. . . . To act in such a manner is not to follow authority, but to forestall it, and, unauthorized, to assume the duties of spiritual rulers to the great detriment of the order which God established in His Church to be observed for ever, and which she does not permit to be violated with impunity by anyone, whoever he may be" ("*Sapientiæ Christianæ*").

There is perhaps no aspect of Catholic Action so frequently and so insistently emphasized by the Holy Fathers as this spirit of obedience to the

divinely constituted authority. "It is of the utmost consequence, in a matter of such moment, that the minds, the wills, the actions of Catholics should be one and the same" (Leo XIII, "Graves de Communi"). Pope Leo XIII reminds us that the Church is "enjoined by her Founder that for the salvation of mankind she is to contend as an army set in array" ("Sapientiæ Christianæ"). Pope Pius XI completes the simile: "The purpose of action of this kind is to raise a great cohort of worthy citizens, namely, of men and women, and especially of the youth of both sexes, to whom nothing will be more fundamental, nothing more desirable than that, by a certain participation in the ministry of the Church, and under her leadership and tutelage, they may labour in public and in private to extend the reign of Christ" (letter to Cardinal Segura). In this army of Christ there are generals as well as soldiers. Victories will result in proportion to the discipline maintained by all. No matter in whom authority is vested it is ever the same voice. "He that heareth you, heareth Me." The battle in Catholic Action is not fought with worldly weapons, but through the peacefully persisting Gospel of Jesus Christ in thought and action. Catholic Action demands perfect obedience in both one and the other. So concludes the present Holy Father: "Since, as we have stated, Catholic Action should go forth as a compact and

courageous army in array, to bring souls into subjection to the benign power of Christ, it must find its vigour in the one and the same unanimous government and in the perfect discipline of all " (*ibid.*).

The extent of this spirit of obedience must be limitless. In ordinary warfare and in worldly armies this obedience pertains only to what is to be done. The soldier may think what he likes provided he carries out instructions. In Catholic Action the soldiers of Christ must subject mind as well as activity. They must think as well as work in perfect submission to authority. "The wisdom of this is readily apprehended. In truth, thought is the principle of action, and hence there cannot exist agreement of will, nor similarity of action, if people all think differently one from the other. . . . This union of minds requires, together with a perfect accord in one faith, complete submission and obedience of will to the Church and to the Roman Pontiff as to God Himself" (Leo XIII, "Sapientiæ Christianæ"). Amongst certain Catholics there arose a kind of mild rationalism, an independence of thought, which brought discredit on the Apostolate they meant to serve. Pope Pius XI enumerates the various errors of those badly disciplined Catholics, and concludes: "In their words, writings, and in the whole tenor of their lives they behave as if the teaching and precepts so often promulgated by Supreme Pontiffs, by Leo XIII in

special manner, by Pius X and by Benedict XV, had lost their native strength and authority, or were completely obsolete. In this there can be recognized a certain kind of modernism in morals, in matters touching authority and the social order, the which, along with modernism in dogma, We specifically condemn " (" Ubi Arcano "). Obstinacy such as this is in open contradiction to the spirit of the lay-apostolate. " Those who please God are those who are ready to give up their own ideas and listen to the bidding of the rules of the Church absolutely, as to His own ; to such He readily gives aid, even when attempting very difficult enterprises, and is wont, in His kindness, to bring their undertakings to the issues they desire " (Leo XIII, " Graves de Communi ").

It is no less important that the actual work, the movements, the organization of effort, should depend on Hierarchical authority. As explained, Catholic Action may be purely spiritual or social. It is evident that spiritual activity, by its very nature, is subject to the authority of the Church. Confraternities of prayer, of adoration, are directly within the ambit of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. " It will easily be seen that all these works, which are immediately in conjunction with the spiritual and pastoral ministry of the Church, and which have a religious aim intended directly for the good of souls, should submit in every smallest particular to

the authority of the Church and to that of the Bishops, who are appointed by the Holy Spirit to rule the Church of God in the diocese assigned to them " (Pius X, " *Il Fermo Proposito* ").

Though little difficulty is experienced in this duty, which directly touches on the spiritual, the need of obedience in the immense field of social action may not seem so apparent. Pope Leo's declaration should remove any existing doubts: " We again enjoin, and with greater insistence, that, whatever schemes people take up in the popular cause, whether individually or in association, they should remember that they must be entirely submissive to episcopal authority " (" *Graves de Communi* ").

No organization of Catholics for Catholic purposes can afford to ignore this essential condition of work for the Church. Approval of the Hierarchy must be regarded as essential in all things. " It would be both incongruous and exceedingly hurtful, therefore, if in parishes or in dioceses there should be formed associations of the faithful with a view to carrying out more or less the same purposes as those undertaken by Catholic Action, but which would have nothing whatever to do with Catholic Action or, what is still worse, contend against it. The individual benefits which these associations confer on a small number of the faithful would be eclipsed by the dire loss which would result from the dissipation and division of Catholic

forces, or it may be even conflict. These very forces are in these times, as we said, already to be used for the benefit of the Church completely unified and bound together through episcopal leadership" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Leme de Silviera Cintra, Archbishop of Rio de Janeiro, October 27th, 1935).

It is true that the Church does not accept responsibility for purely economic reforms, yet in economics and in various measures taken to better social conditions there is always a question of morality, of justice or injustice. Though the Church is indifferent to one economic system or another as such, she may yet have to pronounce on legislation, or reform, should it run counter to the moral law. In such case the lay-apostle must accept the judgment of authority and cease from such action. "Those other works also, which are designed chiefly to restore and promote in Christ true Christian civilization and which constitute Catholic Action in the sense explained, must by no means be considered independent of the advice and discretion of ecclesiastical authority, inasmuch, especially, as they must all be conformed to the principles of Christian faith and morality; still less is it possible to imagine them in opposition, more or less open, to the same power" (Pius X, *ibid.*).

Obedience in Catholic Action is due primarily and principally to the Hierarchy proper, with the Vicar of Christ at its head. But, as Pope Leo XIII

points out, "The Bishops have members of the Clergy to share their duties and carry out their decisions." First in importance is the Parish Priest in his own parish, where he is entrusted with the care of souls under the authority of the Bishop (Code of Canon Law, c. 451, par. 1). Parochial organizations must be mindful of this authority. The Parish Priest is responsible for the good conduct of his parishioners. "He must watch diligently lest anything against faith and morals should be propounded, especially in the schools, both public or private." "He should promote and institute works of Charity, of faith and piety" (*ibid.*, can. 459). There is, furthermore, a delegated authority which carries with it the same necessity for obedience. To different activities are appointed spiritual directors. The extent of their power will depend on the amount of authority given to them by the Bishop or other competent person who appoints. The position of such Spiritual Directors or Chaplains is best summed up in the words of Pope Pius X in a letter to Jean Lerolle, of the Belgian Youth Movement: "He is the doctor, counsellor and guide."

Difficulties have at times arisen in this connection. Laymen have taken on themselves to decide precisely how much power they will place in the hands of the Chaplain. Such a decision is not within their province. It must be decided by the Authority

who appoints them. Disagreement may centre around the question of the temporal and the spiritual. Is it possible for a lay organization to confine the authority of the priest to what is of spiritual concern only? In this again the Bishop must have the deciding voice. In some organizations, such as in the Catholic Young Men's Society, the Spiritual Director has the power of veto on all decisions of committees or general meetings. On the other hand, in the decisions of the Sacred Congregation relative to the Catholic trade unions of Lille and the north of France, the Bishops are congratulated for having appointed "competent and zealous priests to assist the directors and members in spiritual concerns in questions in which moral principles are involved" (*Acta Apostolicæ Sedis*, August 3rd, 1927). There is here no question of authority in regard to temporals. In this matter, the nature of the Catholic organization must be the deciding factor. In some organizations the spiritual and moral is of chief and direct concern. In such the Ecclesiastical Authority may very wisely decide to place the entire organization, even in what pertains to funds and property, under ecclesiastical control. This is particularly true of Catholic Youth movements, such as Catholic Young Men's Societies, Catholic Scout or Girl Guide movements. In such the main issue is not temporal but spiritual and moral. These are primarily educational

movements, and, as such, the more intimate is the ecclesiastical control, always, of course, wisely exercised, the more certain is the movement of success. In other organizations the direct purpose is the temporal prosperity of the members or of a certain class. This involves such organizations in business of purely economic concern. It is well to recall what was already said of such social organizations. In the words of the Present Holy Father, "When they (such associations) employ their activity directly in the economic and professional domain, they themselves alone bear the responsibility of their initiative and activity in so far as they are concerned with purely economic interest" (letter to Cardinal Segura). Since the association or the associates must be responsible for their actions in such matters, it is evident that such decisions, apart from any conflict with the moral law, cannot be subject to the authority of the priest.

From all this it is clear that priestly authority occupies a very prominent place in all associations for Catholic Action; once a society labels itself as a Catholic Action organization it is no longer free to choose how much or how little of the Church's authority it will tolerate. All that is decided beforehand. It must accept. Its very existence depends on that. "In any enterprise of this kind, with which the interests of the Church and of Christians are

so closely bound up, it is clear that the priesthood ought to be throughout concerned that it may assist in many ways by its learning, its prudence and its charity" ("Graves de Communi"). One cannot but view with distaste any organization which, while proclaiming its zeal for Catholic Action, yet consciously or unconsciously proposes to place the priest in a position of inferiority, or even of equality with the layman. Such an organization is a monster of disorder. There is need of clear thinking in this respect. The priests can never be placed on a level with a layman where the work of the Church is concerned. The sacred character impressed on him by Christ places him in a unique position. How deplorable a commentary on our understanding of Christian principles it would be if associations were allowed to continue uncorrected in their perverse attitude towards priestly demands. A society that calls itself Catholic must be Catholic in truth and not in name only.

In reality organizations have nothing to lose but everything to gain from priestly control or direction. Such direction will not impede, but will promote the purpose of Catholic associations. It will not destroy but develop initiative. The fact that laymen are acting officially gives them a standing which is of itself a source of inspiration. "As Catholics ever bear aloft the standard of Christ, for that very reason they bear aloft the standard of

the Church ” (“ Il Fermo Proposito ”). The work is supernatural ; the help, not only in action, but in thought and inspiration, is supernatural also. “ Catholic Associations will certainly flourish if steadfastly and faithfully they abide by the directions which this Apostolic See has given or will give. Let all members of societies which further the interests of God and His Church ever remember the words of Divine Wisdom : ‘ An obedient man shall speak of victory ’ ; for unless they obey God by showing deference to the Head of the Church, vainly will they look for divine assistance ; vainly too will they labour ” (Benedict XV, “ Ad Beatissimi ”).

Docile relationship with the Bishop and his Clergy not alone ensures the essential authority and power, but also brings the lay-apostle into touch with a rich source of experience and of encouragement. “ To the faithful, thus associated and united in order to stand ready at the beckoning of the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy, this same Hierarchy, even as it has given its mandate, bestows also its inspiration and its impulse ” (Pius X. letter to Cardinal Segura). As Pope Pius points out : “ So long as the object (of Catholic works of divers kind) is praiseworthy, their Christian principles firm, and the means they use are just, so long are they to be praised and encouraged in every way ” (“ Il Fermo Proposito ”).

Episcopal control does not cramp effort ; it guides it. Whilst helping each association in its statutes and plan of campaign, it yet allows a wide scope for personal development. "A certain freedom of organization should be allowed them (these works) for it is not possible, when many persons meet together, that all should be modelled on the same pattern or follow one single direction" (*ibid.*). Moreover, certain aspects of Catholic Action need greater freedom than others. "Works of a social character," lays down Pope Pius X, "from their very nature, ought to move with a befitting and reasonable freedom, since they are held responsible for their acts, particularly in temporal and economic matters, and in those of public administrative or political life, all of which are foreign to a purely spiritual ministry" (*ibid.*).

A final word of advice to laymen and women who have taken up the work of Catholic Action. Zeal can oftentimes become excessive. Some are so taken up with the particular scheme they wish to promote that they become impatient of any delay by authority in approving of this movement. As a certain professor once said, "The Church has eternity." She moves slowly but ever so surely. Those who have not learned the lesson of patiently waiting until their movement has justified approval have learned scarcely anything at all. "It were better that a work be not accomplished than that it

were done outside, or against, the will of the Bishop," was one of the directions to the Bishops of Italy (letter from the Cardinal Secretary of State, July, 1904). The same admonition should keep the lay-apostle from too great impulsiveness. The main point to consider in such circumstances is, if Almighty God wants the particular movement or activity which I am engaged in promoting, He knows the proper time, and He will bring it to pass. If He does not wish it, of what use can it be? Moreover, delay is providential. It constrains promoters of Catholic activity to think more deeply on their purpose, and to formulate their plans more and more carefully. No organization is worth having which cannot stand the test of time. Beginnings are of little account. Only those who persevere merit approbation. "Patience hath a perfect work." Many a movement for Catholic Action would long ago have been lost in oblivion had it not met with delay. What is granted too easily is not treasured. But the approbation of authority which is granted when workers have proved the merit of their purpose, the strength of their organization, the docility of the members, and the steadfastness of their zeal, is a gift to be long treasured and to inspire endeavour that will not easily fail.

CHAPTER II

THE POLITICAL ISSUE

ONE of the most remarkable developments in the history of the Church in our time is the ever-widening Campaign of Catholic Action, "which it is Our great consolation to see extending far and wide, becoming everywhere more fervent throughout the Catholic World" (Pius XI. letter to Cardinal Cerejeira). Not less remarkable a phenomenon is the violent opposition, the fierce hatred, with which the enemies of the Church meet this exercise of her benign power to restore life to the nations. Once again, and perhaps more seriously than ever before, the Church is confronted by a great crisis and musters all her strength to meet it. All around her the storm rages. Hideous error has created error still more hideous. Liberalism begot Capitalism, which in its turn is offset by Socialism and Communism. But, though the world is divided into warring camps, though class struggles against class, though one extreme in social excess lives in terror of other extremes not less excessive yet through all there lies a perverse unison. The voices

of error raise their discordant but united cry, hatred of the Church of Christ. It is the cry of Sadducee, of Pharisee, of Scribe and of the rabble: "Away with Him"; "This man maketh Himself a King." Now, as of old, some excuse must be given for action taken, for persecution, for imprisonment, for destruction, for death. Poor foolish humanity. It forgets that the society against which it pits itself is eternal—that what they seek to destroy is no mere earthly organization, but a Divinely Constituted society with a Divine pledge of indestructibility. The history of nigh two thousand years should teach those who re-echo the cry of the Sanhedrim and the Jewish mob, that persecution, far from destroying, only strengthens the Church of Christ. St. Paul well realized the strength of this spiritual force: "Who, then, shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? Or distress? Or famine? Or nakedness? Or danger? Or persecution? Or the sword?" (Epistle to the Romans, viii 35).

This century has seen persecutions of the Church as fierce and malignant as were ever waged against Christianity. "Deeds which sound the very depths of wickedness" were perpetrated in Mexico. The Russian Soviet has set herself to the task of ruthlessly destroying every vestige of religion. The Catholics of Spain have likewise experienced the diabolical hatred that can possess men's hearts

against Christ and His Church. In these countries the Church was, and is still, confronted with the greatest menace Christian civilization ever faced—rank and organized atheism, an atheism that is not alone a denial but a hatred of God, Whose existence they refuse to admit. In Communism we reach the ultimate degree of materialism. Catholicity, with its life of the spirit, is impossible. The essential foundation of Communism is atheism and hatred of Christianity. It adores the State, the proletariat, as its only God. Individuals without immortality or any hope to come have no personal destiny, no personal existence except as quantitative parts of the whole proletariat. Between this abyss of error and Christianity there is no hope of truce or of conciliation. The antagonism between State and Church is complete.

In other countries, and under another guise, the excessive exaltation of the State over the highest interests of the Spirit, whilst not atheistic nor openly against Religion, is yet unwilling to admit the right of the Church to carry out, unhindered, her mission and her methods of evangelization. Ultra-Nationalism has been in the last few years a cause of serious complications, if not of actual breaches between Church and State. In these cases the attack has been levelled principally against the Catholic Action movement. As the present Holy Father declared : “ Wicked men have tried to place the Church in a

bad light before the people ; some, for example, uttering the most brazen lies in public assemblies. . . . Others use hostile newspapers in order to obscure the truth and to malign Catholic Action (" *Iniquis Afflictisque*," November, 1926). Though the dispute between the Fascist Government and the Vatican has now happily been settled, and misunderstandings laid aside, yet the nature of this dispute, the charges levelled against Catholic Action and the defence of the movement by the Holy Father are exceedingly helpful in determining the true nature of this campaign in relation to the secular power of the State. The statements in the Encyclical of Pope Pius XI provide a basis of settlement of all future difficulties in this matter. It is to be hoped that other States, such as Germany, will see the wisdom of Mussolini's abandonment of too autocratic a position. The State has nothing to fear, but everything to gain, from a properly understood Catholic Action movement.

"An attempt has been made to strike a mortal blow," says the Holy Father, "at that which was, and always will be, dearest to Our heart as Father and as Shepherd of Souls ; and we can—indeed we must—add that "the way in which it has been done offends Us still more" (" *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* "). The accusation brought against Catholic Action by the Fascist Party—we might say, the excuse for the bitterness of their attack—was that

Catholic Action was a political party and a consequent enemy of the State. The mode of suppression was savage. The University Association, for instance, was disbanded by force. "It was a disbanding which was carried out in such a way and by such methods as to give the impression that action was being taken against a vast and dangerous organization of criminals. . . . It was with a grief inexpressible that We saw a real persecution break out in this Our Italy, and in this very City of Rome, against that which the Church and its Head have characterized as most precious and dear to them from the standpoint of liberty and of right" (*ibid.*). There is no need, now that all has been happily settled, to describe, as the Holy Father does in the Encyclical, the measures, always unjust, sometimes blasphemous, that were taken. It remains to explain the defence of the Pope against the charge of political interference by Catholic Action.

The Fascist document described the Church and the Holy See as a "foreign Power." It likewise declared that "the assertion that Catholic Action has not had a true political character is absolutely false" (*ibid.*). The real question at issue is clear. "We dare to say that even Catholic Action itself is only a pretext. That which is desired, and that which is attempted, is to tear away from Catholic Action, and, through this process, to tear away from the Church the young—all the young" (*ibid.*).

The root of this desire was to "monopolize the young from their tenderest years up to manhood and womanhood, for the exclusive advantage of a party and of a regime based on an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, a real, pagan worship of the State—the 'Statolatry' which is no less in contrast with the native rights of the family than it is in contradiction to the supernatural rights of the Church" (*ibid.*). The Holy Father vigorously defends the rights of the Church and of the Holy See against this injustice. He asserts that "Catholic Action from its very nature and essence, as well as by Our precise and categorical directions, is outside and above all party politics." He shows, moreover, clearly and convincingly that in Italy its promoters, in faithful obedience to their Bishops, never infringed on the political arena.

The misunderstanding, real or pretended, of the true character of Catholic Action by the Italian Government shows how important is the realization of the true relationship of Catholic Action to politics. To aid us in this we had not to wait for the protests of the Holy Father against the action of the Fascist Government. Mussolini himself could have had ample evidence of the meaning of Catholic Action from the very first Encyclicals on the subject. Pope Leo XIII said in 1885; "A hackneyed reproach of old date is levelled against her, that the Church is opposed to the rightful aims of Civil Government"

("Immortale Dei," November, 1885). In 1898 he, like His successor, Pius XI, had to make a protest against the Freemason Italian Government concerning their persecution of Catholic Action groups in a letter to the Bishops of Italy. The circumstances were somewhat akin. A decree of suppression accused the "Circles of the Catholic Youth organized by clerical initiative as constituting, properly speaking, political associations." "The motto of these Circles," states the decree, "'prayer, action, sacrifice,' proves this organization to be ready to resist" ("La Storia dell' Azione Catholica," Olgiati, Milano, 1920). Pope Leo saw very difficult times. "The Civil Power of the Popes is overthrown, and the Church sees herself deprived of her means of action and influence on public and social institutions" ("Spese Volte," August, 1898).

Pope Leo distinguishes carefully between national and party politics. National interests are the purpose of, and are promoted by, national politics. Party politics serve the interest of some particular party. As regards national interests, and especially when such interests are concerned with Christian principles, it is clearly the duty of Catholics to use their utmost influence in directing legislation. The manner of this direction, whether through the legislative assembly directly or indirectly by the creation of public opinion, is a matter of prudence. In some countries Catholic parties were formed

mainly as a last resort against liberal or socialist aggression. "It is in general fitting and salutary that Catholics should extend their efforts . . . and give their attention to *National* politics. We say *in general* because these our precepts are addressed to all Nations. However, it may in some places be true that for the most urgent and just reasons, it is by no means expedient for Catholics to engage in public affairs or to take an active part in politics. Nevertheless, as we have laid down, to take no share in public matters would be equally as wrong (We speak in general) as not to have concern for, or not to bestow labour upon the common good" ("Immortale Dei"). Pope Leo, in the same Encyclical, takes care to point out that the purpose of such political activity is "for the advancement of truth and justice" and "to bring back all civil society to the pattern and form of Christianity." "The means adopted must suit places and times."

Far different is the Holy Father's attitude to party politics. "In matters purely political, as, for instance, the best form of Government, and this or that system of administration, a difference of opinion is lawful." He would blame in particular Catholics who would, under the guise of their religion, cast aspersion on members of other political parties. "Those, therefore, whose piety is in other respects known, and whose minds are ready to accept in

all obedience the decrees of the Apostolic See, cannot in justice be accounted bad men because they disagree as to the subjects we have mentioned ; and still greater wrong will be done them if—as we have more than once perceived with regret—they are accused of violating, or of wavering in the Catholic faith ” (*ibid.*).

Party politics—but not national interests—must be excluded from Catholic Action. Pope Pius X reiterates the teaching of his predecessor. “ Christian Democracy (Catholic Action) ought never to mix in politics and ought never to be made use of for party purposes or political objects. That is not its province, but it should be a beneficial activity in favour of the people, founded on the natural law and the precepts of the Gospel ” (“ Fin Dalla Prima ”). Catholic Action can never be regarded as a political society. Its purpose is far higher. “ It would be very wrong to distort the term ‘ Christian Democracy ’ and use it in a political sense. For, although Democracy by its very name and by philosophical usage denotes popular rule, yet in its application it must be employed altogether without political signification, so as to mean nothing but the beneficent Christian action on behalf of the people. The precepts of the natural law and the Gospel, for the very reason that they transcend the changes of human existence, must necessarily be independent of any particular form

of civil government. They are, therefore, and remain in themselves, completely outside party rivalries and political changes" ("Graves de Communi"). For a like reason, in his definition of Catholic Action, the present Holy Father proclaims that it must be "outside and above all political parties." "Therefore, in its very nature as in the very nature of the Church, it is above and outside all political parties, being directed, not to achieve or protect the particular interests of special people, but to procure the true good of souls by extending as far as possible the reign of Christ Our Lord" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

One may debate the wisdom of forming Catholic political parties. Experience shows how difficult it is to keep the interests of the spiritual and the temporal domains distinct. From this result many inconveniences. In countries in which Socialism and Liberalism have an ascendancy, the institution of a Catholic or denominational party tends to add hatred of religion to political hatred. Another barrier is raised to the spiritual conquest which is the purpose of the Church. Where Catholic parties have arisen, it has been from dire necessity, as a last resort to save the country from the disastrous effects of liberal or socialist unopposed legislation. In countries where political parties are divided on questions merely of political or material interests, and where there is no question of setting up anti-

Christian legislation, a Catholic party would be a hindrance rather than a help. Reforms required in such circumstances can be won by pressure from outside resulting from the creation of a more Catholic public opinion.

Facts of history prove how careful ecclesiastical authority has always been, once a party bearing the name "Catholic" entered the political arena. It has insisted on a clear line of demarcation being preserved between what is of spiritual and purely material concern. "In so far as by their denominational stand they have taken up the defence of Christian principles they are subject to ecclesiastical authority. In what is merely political they are independent and in no wise subject to authority; nor does ecclesiastical authority accept any responsibility for their actions" (Pope Leo XIII, letter to Spanish Bishops, December, 1882).

A very clear-cut distinction must be preserved between political action and Catholic social reform. It follows also that organizations which seek the betterment of their class, such as Catholic trade unions, benefit societies, etc., have a very different status in Catholic Action to that of political parties, even though the latter call themselves Catholic. Such organizations are specifically recommended and approved. They are to receive every encouragement. But, beyond appealing to Catholics to interest themselves in the affairs—national, political

and public—of their country, and asserting their right, if circumstances call for it, to unite as a party to protect Catholic interests in the National Assembly, the Church is not unmindful of the dangers of such action to her spiritual interests. Consequently she admonishes those who enter the political arena of the grave responsibility they undertake, and of the obedience they owe to Authority in matters concerning religion. The Encyclicals make quite clear that it is only to the extent of genuine Catholic interests they may act in the name of the Church. Furthermore, they point out, as we have seen, that the formation of a Catholic party must never be allowed to make insidious distinctions between Catholics so as to divide them into hostile camps or to embroil Catholic activity in petty party struggles. It might well be that Catholics, otherwise excellent, might not wish to support political action, and might disagree with other policies of a material order pursued by such parties. Religion must not be used to constrain this allegiance (cp. *ibid.*, Letter to Spanish Bishops, 1882). “You must never consent that the interests of religion be mixed up with political discussions, because these interests are as superior to everything as Heaven is to earth. For this very reason they are worthy of censure who, to benefit particular groups, or to attain some political purpose, use the name Catholic as an argument and abuse the Catholic

sentiments of the people" (letter of Leo XIII to Spanish Bishops, December, 1894).

Looking back over the history of different Catholic parties during the last fifty years or so, this reserve on the part of the Church is perfectly clear. Such parties are always kept very distinct from the other organizations for purely Catholic purposes. They exist by themselves. In Holland, for instance, the "Roomsche-Katholieke Staats Party," though denominational, is not completely adopted by Ecclesiastical Authority, and though, from time to time, it may be advised in matters of spiritual interest, it is completely independent of the Church in political issues. On the other hand, the "Katholieke Sociale Actie," which is the central organization of all Dutch Catholic Action Societies, excludes all political action from its programme.

In Germany the Centre Party, which is commonly regarded as Catholic, has always avoided becoming denominational. It is not confined to Catholics, but opens its ranks even to Protestants who are willing to accept its programme. In Belgium the Catholic Party, which represents various interests—business as well as labour, though it is officially known as the "Union Catholique"—has never called itself denominational and is in complete independence, as regards politics, to Ecclesiastical Authority. "In matters of faith and belief,"

declared M. Deschamps in the Belgian Parliament in 1864, "we obey a religious authority, which reason recognizes and freely accepts. . . . But in the political domain we are amenable only to our independence and to our patriotism. In politics we obey ourselves. We ask permission from no one to interpret as we think fit our duties as citizens" (Piccard, "L'Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Belge," Louvain, 1924, p. 52). In Italy the history of the "Partito Popolare" furnishes the same testimony. Though its programme and purpose were Catholic, it was not a Catholic party officially. Pope Benedict XV, and, later, the present Holy Father, forbade any official clerical support of the Party. In October, 1922, a few months before the first Fascist elections, this order was renewed by the Cardinal Secretary of State. It is clear the Church does not wish to interfere or to have anyone pretend to interfere in her name in merely political issues. "Her action is not political but religious" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Segura).

Though Catholic Action is non-political, yet politics may receive from it an immense benefit. The weakness of party politics, as we know it to-day, is the blindness with which it pursues a certain policy. Its bitterness divides the people without hope of that clear thinking which alone brings conciliation. It exacts of its adherents an allegiance

which in any other walk of life would seem to them ridiculous. Personalities are followed without thought whether they are right or wrong. Questions are examined not on their merits but in the light of party policy. "Politics have twined about us like a strangling parasite, and the greater part of contemporary political and social life has no reality, no being at all. It is just bogus. The strife of parties, parliaments, conferences, newspapers, programmes and platforms, propaganda and demonstrations, the grab and scheming for power—these are not life; they have no point of contact with its essence and end; they are a hopeless hindrance. The world needs a strong reaction from this domination by exterior things, a change back in favour of interior spiritual life, not only for the sake of individuals, but for the sake of real metaphysical life itself" (Nicholas Berayaev, "The End of Our Time," Sheed and Ward, 1933, p. 205).

Catholic Action, with its essentially spiritual character and outlook, provides an ideal antidote to this confusion in the world of politics. It provides a school of thought through its study circles and the other means of propaganda which all politicians might well frequent. Would that the Catholic members of our Dáil, for instance, were prepared for their career in such a school. The bitterness that now prevails would never have so obscured their

minds, or suffered them to forget their brotherhood in Christ. "Politics in its own time, when required, and by whom required, with a suitable preparation, a complete preparation, religious, cultural, economic, social; a preparation all the more thorough since Catholic Action, without engaging in politics itself, would teach Catholics to make the best use possible of politics. To such a use, precisely, all good citizens are obliged, and Catholics in a very special way, because their Catholic profession itself demands of them that they should be the best citizens. This preparation is what every profession requires. He who wishes to be a good politician cannot neglect the duty of an appropriate preparation" (Pius XI, Address to Catholic Students, "*Osservatore Romano*," September, 1924).

Catholic Action organizations must not only exclude politics from their programme, but preserve themselves from the encroachments of parties or politicians. More than one movement of high purpose has been destroyed for this reason. In Ireland, for instance, the Parnell split worked havoc in the Catholic Young Men's Societies. Complete independence of party politics gives a strength to the organization and makes its action efficacious by reason of its purity of intention. Every organization, every Catholic study circle, should by reason of the steadfastness of its Catholic principles be able to take up any question, though it be at the

time a grave political issue, and examine it independently of all party bias. That is the test of the measure of the members' real exclusion of politics.

This chapter cannot be closed without a quotation from the Encyclical on Catholic Action by Pope Pius X regarding priestly responsibility in this question of politics. "While, however, we point out the right rule of Catholic Action, We cannot disguise the no small danger to which the clergy of the present day are exposed; it is that of attaching an excessive importance to the material interests of the people, forgetting the much more serious ones of the sacred ministry. The priest, raised higher than other men to fulfil the mission he has received from God, ought to keep himself equally above all human interests, all classes of society. His proper field of action is the Church, where, as ambassador of God, he preaches the truth and inculcates, along with respect for the rights of God, respect also for the rights of every creature. Acting thus he does not expose himself to opposition. He does not appear as a party man supporting one side, or going against another. Nor, for the sake of avoiding collision with certain tendencies, and of not irritating by argument minds already embittered, does he put himself in danger of disguising truth or of suppressing it, which in both cases would be to fail in his duty. . . . He

ought not therefore to join any association of this kind except after mature consideration, with the approval of his Bishop, and in those cases only where his assistance is safe from danger and is evidently useful " (" Il Fermo Proposito ").



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PART VI

ORGANIZATION



CHAPTER I

THE POWER OF ORGANIZATION

“THE faithful would not so completely and advantageously satisfy these duties as is fitting they should were they to enter the field as isolated champions of the faith” (Leo XIII, “*Sapientiæ Christianæ*”). Individual members of the Church are called upon to profess and, if need be, to defend their Faith. As has been remarked, Catholic Action must be personal before it can become organized. But the individual, left to himself and by his unaided efforts, can accomplish very little. His voice is not strong enough to attract attention, his strength is not sufficient to bring conviction. He stands alone. His influence is certainly of great value, and can later become the centre of a powerful movement, but by itself it remains more personal than social. It does not form public opinion directly; it acts on individuals rather than on Society. When, however, the individual enthusiast becomes associated with others of like enthusiasm through some Catholic organization, his voice, united with other voices, becomes loud and impera-

tive—his efforts, exercised in harmony with other efforts, become a mighty power.

The real efficacy of Catholic Action depends on the strength of its organization. A group, animated by a common purpose and acting in unison, acquires an incomparable force for good. As Pope Leo points out, Our Divine Lord was well aware of the power of association. "He willed not only to train His disciples in doctrine, but to unite them in one society and fastly conjoin them in one body, which is the Church, whereof He would be the Head" (*ibid.*). An ideal shared, an ideal around which minds are grouped, on which thought from divers intelligences is focused, emerges of necessity from the realm of speculation. It becomes a living force. Seized upon by many minds, it is examined from every angle and gradually insinuates itself into the lives of its adherents. The deeper it sinks, the more it appeals to the generosity of those who give it their allegiance, the wider does it spread its circle of influence, and the greater becomes its power of conquest. Ideas are of little value, if left just in the air, unless someone gets busy about them. When a group dedicates itself to an ideal, it is no longer merely the ideal itself that counts, but the group of men or women possessed by it. The ideal has become energized into a human force. In Catholic Action this force is still further strengthened by the divine power of supernatural grace.

This is the first and most essential power of organization. It springs from the very nature of organization. It is the solidarity of serried ranks moving forward to the actualizing of its inspiring ideal. In Catholic Action the power of this combined strength, through the common purpose of installing Christian life in the family and in society, cannot easily be measured. Given a Catholic group animated by such an inspiration, with such a purpose possessing mind and heart, ready to devote their compact and united strength, ready, if need be, as their faith demands of them, to die for its truth, no doubt may be entertained as to its efficacy. No longer is the Gospel the mere spoken or written word ; it is a living Gospel, a Gospel living in the group, a Gospel borne forward on the conquering, solidly united shoulders of its apostles.

Organization possesses yet another though less essential power. An ideal which is capable of capturing and unifying a group of intelligences is of necessity many sided, if not in itself, at least in what it demands for its perfect fulfilment. The broader the ideal, the deeper its influence in human life, naturally the wider and more exacting must be its demands on those who serve its cause. Some ideals of human life are just personal—they demand but personal activity such as the practice of a Christian virtue. But ideals which are social and which affect the well-being of the whole body, being a

characteristic of the group, require the force of a group for their accomplishment. A good example of this is given by St. Thomas in his treatise on the necessity of human society. "Man is a social animal, because he needs many things for his life which, standing alone, he cannot prepare; consequently man becomes part of some society through which he is enabled to live well" (cf. I, *Ethic.* i). "It is necessary for man to live socially, that one may be helped by another and various people may be occupied in different callings as reason indicates, one in medicine, another in this profession, someone else in that" ("De Reg. Princ.," I, i). Apart from the strength of the group as a group, the great value of organization lies in its distribution of activity: "Different things should be done by different people" ("Cont. Gentes.," III, 134).

This second characteristic power of organization consists in the capacity of a society to distribute many different tasks amongst its members. It thus ensures an easy and efficacious accomplishment of its purpose. Individuals, be they ever so earnest, can accomplish very little as long as they work alone. From the moment they associate, each one's task, directed from the centre, forms a circle of activity which contains within itself all that is required for the attainment of the proposed task. Naturally, to be efficacious this secondary power of organization demands the pre-existence of solidarity

—only when the common ideal imbues the mind of all the members can a society possess the spirit and power of co-operation, coupled with singleness of purpose.

In a society which undertakes the Hierarchical Apostolate this power of co-operation is of extreme importance. Though each member of the group is differently occupied, yet the efforts of all are united by the centralizing directive power of common purpose that governs and controls. In this way the smallest task, the most menial undertaking, does not stand by itself; it is part of and assumes the dignity of the purpose which inspires the whole organization. The victory of conquest, the merit even of having fought a lost but just cause, is not attributed to the generals, but to the whole army (cp. St. Thomas, I Ethic). Even those who work in the canteen, though they never see the firing line, nevertheless contribute to the success, share in the dignity and are part of the power of the entire army. Likewise in Catholic Action the work of each individual member of an organization in the sphere, and in the manner directed by obedience, constitutes with other efforts one efficacious movement towards the achievement of Christian ideals.

This co-operative strength will be felt, in the domain of Catholic Action not only in one organization, but in the many and varied associations that undertake different types of activity on behalf of

Christian principles. The field of Catholic Action is a very wide one. It enters, as we have seen, into every phase of human life. Yet the campaign is one. All the organizations are working for the same end. The many portions of the Christian social structure—demanding many artisans skilled in their own profession—form one great edifice. Variety of organization, provided it is well directed, is not weakness but co-operative strength.

The power of organized Catholic Action is not as yet sufficiently realized. No matter how small a group may be, once it is organized, once it speaks and acts as a group, it possesses a new power. Union of mind, determination of wills on one purpose, has a powerful influence. An organization is listened to and respected when it asserts right principles. It is dangerous even when known to be wrong. Not unfrequently when engaged in organizing work on behalf of Catholic Action one is met with the argument, too often a cloak for laziness: But what good could a little group of people like us do? What would we count for? What is the use of forming a study circle for the type of man and woman in this parish? The obvious answer is of course—why not try? It is far better to risk failure in attempting something than to stand idly by and allow unchecked progress to the forces of evil. But the results of a determined and sustained effort to organize will not be as slow

as anticipated. An earnest study circle can influence the opinions of those in authority almost as soon as it is founded. Guided by priestly advice and inspired by Catholic social teaching, its unanimous decisions and resolutions will be readily listened to, and reforms, perhaps small at first, will quickly follow.

The opportunities of good work by study circles and Catholic associations in Ireland especially are immense. It will be found that those who hold local or national power, being sound Catholics, are only too anxious to follow the lead of disinterested and unselfishly devoted Catholic leaders of thought. It is not a dream to visualize an immense and organized power for good under varied inspiration spreading over the whole of this country. Each approved organization, with its network of societies united and centralized in itself, will be part of the great Catholic movement. Catholic organizations, moving towards the same purpose in different ways, centralized and directed—that is the ideal, and that ideal, to reach which we have already taken initial steps, spells power—power unlimited and reassuring—a power which will preserve this country from the new paganism and make it ever a choice preserve of Christian ideals. This is the “multiplication of men and means” recommended by the Holy Father. Leaders in other countries must judge of their own opportunities of organized action.

CHAPTER II

THE SPIRIT OF ASSOCIATION

SOCIETIES great or small, are the combining of many members for the one purpose. It is the purpose common to all, to which each one is separately dedicated, which imparts unity to the whole. Without it there may be a multitude, but never what St. Thomas calls an "associated multitude." A body of men, meeting together and associated in external juxta-position, or frequently coming together into a common room or hall, is not a society. Momentary recreation, precipitate action or casual meetings, though they give a certain purpose to assemblies, do not constitute a society, since their purpose is neither stable nor permanent. A society demands in the members who form it a permanency of disposition to work constantly on behalf of a definite object. The more definite and well defined is this purpose, naturally the closer will be union. It sometimes happens that groups, because of a common name under which a number are collected, seem to be and parade themselves as societies. In reality they are not such, since the bond which

unites them is indefinite and weak. Their purpose, though nominal, is not a reality, since it does not create union. Society or Association must be more than a name.

The first necessity in organization is to create the spirit of Association. This is nothing else than the vivifying unifying purpose. The more this purpose enters into the mind and heart of each member the greater will be the impulse of the general body towards its attainment. This captivating of the minds of the members is slow work, especially in the beginning. But it must be undertaken, and undertaken methodically. If you take, for example, a mere association for sport—a football association. There, generally speaking, you will have manifest keenness. The members are all concentrated on the good of the game. They study tactics. Each member tries to contribute some original idea of passing, of combination, or general play, so as to circumvent opponents on the field. Battles are won off the field as well as on. Keenness for the game on the part of those who never take part in the actual struggle for supremacy gives a vitality and an earnestness which brings the team a long way towards victory.

When there is question of Catholic Action a similar keenness must be established even in what is generally known as the rank and file. Naturally leaders must first be inspired with the spirit of

association, but, unless this impulse passes through them down to the individual members, there will be no associated vitality, nor will the power already attributed to organization in general be verified in such a society. There will be no solidarity, no concentration of multiple activity towards a common centre or purpose. "Agreement in purpose and unity of strength constitutes a necessary preliminary for the success of all the tasks of Catholic Action and of the Church itself. Was it not the wish of Our Lord and almost the last testament to His disciples, *that they might be one*" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

It is all-important that in societies dedicated to Catholic Action attention be given to a definite formation of the members. Not unfrequently a multiplication of members is mistaken for organization. A society which has a large membership, but without proper leadership or definite purpose, with little or no attempt at formation, may become a danger. For this reason the present Holy Father appeals for quality rather than for quantity. Half a dozen trained men are of more use to the Church than a host of untrained, unformed and uninterested individuals, call them what you may.

The spirit of Association is nothing else than personal and grouped dedication to the Society's purpose. Such a dedication implies the giving of oneself, the absorption of one's person in the task

that lies before. How hard it is to achieve this ! The ruin of many a splendid organization is attributable to the failure of its members to put the Society's purpose before self-interest. People are free to enter an organization, but once they enter they have an obligation to form themselves in the essential *esprit de corps*—the family spirit—the spirit of the Society. Without this formation no society can be true to itself. It will parade under false colours, having nothing but a name to attest to its Catholicity. "The success of every society of men," declared Pope Benedict XV, "for whatever purpose it is formed, is bound up with the harmony of the members in the interests of the common cause" ("Ad Beatissimi," November, 1914).

The spirit of Association not only groups but gives to each member that largeness of outlook, that loftiness of ideal, which alone is capable of raising the organization over the difficulties which are inseparable from human intercourse. It is opposed to the small-mindedness and pettiness of those who seek their own interests and subordinate the purpose of the organization to personal feelings. There are some who enter societies to take and not to give. They measure their efforts on its behalf, as they measured their resolution to enter, by the thought—what will it do for me ? There is only one genuine postulant, there is only one genuine worker—the man or the woman who is willing to

spend and be spent on behalf of the Society's purpose.

Naturally the nobler is the purpose of a society, the firmer and more intense must be this personal dedication. Great causes require great sacrifices. Organizations of worldly concern may be given an interest in keeping with the place their purpose holds in human life. The spirit of a sport organization should bring with it an enthusiasm sufficient for the recreative purpose of amusement. Such is expected even in material societies. But in the case of Catholic Action, since the purpose of its organization is eternal and supernatural, the enthusiasm of the associates should be of a still higher order. The spirit of a Catholic Action association is the highest that can enter human life, since it is the very spirit of Christ, in Whose labours we share. Once the individual members are possessed of this spirit there is nothing to fear. Their success is assured. Pettiness, with the recriminations and friction which are its accompaniments, will be overshadowed by the greatness of this ideal.

The spirit of association in Catholic Action comes from the great virtue of magnanimity which seeks to do great things for God and for God's cause wherever found. This virtue is part of the cardinal virtue of fortitude and is in a very special way connected with the gift of the Holy Spirit. It bestows not alone the desire to do great things,

but a holy optimism in their accomplishment. It brings with it a tenacity of purpose which regards, not the time or energy spent, but the purpose to be accomplished. It is not deterred by difficulty or opposition, but, conscious of the justice of the cause that is undertaken, looks on difficulties as Heaven-sent for the perfection of the work and regards opposition and indifference, on the part of those who should help, as further proof of the necessity of persevering. Without magnanimity this spirit of perseverance is impossible. Magnanimity furthermore directs the intention. There is no question of seeking the limelight or public prominence. If the light of the Apostle must at times shine before men, it is for God it shines. If a certain prominence is inevitable, the apostle does not rejoice in a thing so trivial, but rather that his name is written in Heaven.

Given this consecration to the Society's purpose, which is the essential basis of all union, the spirit of association further demands a sense of discipline in activity. No society is possible without leaders. Leaders are useless unless they can command the respect and obedience of all the members. In Catholic Action the first obedience of both associations and their individual members must be to the Hierarchy and its representatives. But organizations are generally governed from within by committees and officials usually elected by the members. To this body the members must likewise show

respect. Too often committees and officials are regarded as mere servants, who, either because they like such dignities or because office was thrust upon them, are appointed to look after finance and, in general, keep the organization going for the benefit of the members. That they should lead and inspire, or that their leadership and inspiration should demand the co-operation of the individuals, is too frequently forgotten. Committee work, the efforts of officials, are a disheartening task when the members are not interested in the purpose of their society or too selfish to make an effort to carry it out. If everything is left to officials, instead of having power to demand co-operation they must go a-begging for help.

A governing and directive council is of the greatest importance in an organization. But without the fidelity and loyalty of the entire society officials become just figureheads of a defunct body. Personalities in this matter must not count. It is the Cause that matters. One sometimes hears such declarations as, "If So-and-so is elected I will drop out of this movement," or "I could not work for him." Such an attitude simply means that self is raised above the society's purpose. On this rock is many a good society wrecked. Selfishness is hard to discern and is often cloaked under pretended zeal for the purpose of the organization. It causes endless trouble. The genuine member

must extinguish it, if found. The true spirit of association leaves self out of consideration, except in so far as self can find its highest expression in forgetfulness of what is its own and in service to a cause that is higher and nobler than itself.

If selfishness in individual members is dangerous to the spirit of Association it is still a greater danger when it is found grouped within and against the general group. Cliques are simply a society within a society seeking their own interests as against the general purpose. They belong to a race of whisperers, working not in the open but in dark corners. They have not the decency to come out into the light and to declare their purpose openly because their purpose is ashamed of the light. Such cliques are the bane of a society. They do incalculable damage and may end by disrupting the entire organization. They work under the guise of efficiency and strive to undermine the authority. Instead of falling into line and working with others, they watch, whisper and condemn. They have no idea of doing anything themselves, but they are filled with spite and envy if other members succeed in justifying their existence as associates of a Catholic Action body.

The spirit of Society is one of unselfish helpfulness. Every society needs new ideas, new developments. No group of men can be perfect—no organization faultless. General, open and fearless,

yet always kindly, discussion focuses attention on the shortcomings of an organization. But let it be open and general for every member to hear. Let there be no whispers. What a member must whisper to another member or group of members he is ashamed to speak out aloud. Frankness and kindliness born of the consciousness of high purpose is the keynote to a society's well-being.

There is yet another form of selfishness in organization. The dedication of the group to the Society's purpose may entail a social or group selfishness which is equally dangerous. Each society must remember that there are other organizations of equally high purpose. It sometimes happens that societies become jealous and small-minded in their relations with other organizations. They become self-centred and lose sight of the general and wider purpose which unites all societies in the cause of the Church. Like large business trusts they sometimes seek to absorb or crush out of existence other organizations of Catholic Action. No society within the Church can afford to belittle in any way any recognized organization, be it ever so small.

The spirit of Association is therefore wide in its demands. It brings many virtues into play. It permeates every thought and action of the group, centring everything in the cause that is served. Without it no organization can be called living,

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since it is its very soul. Under its impulse the body marches as a strong phalanx towards the common good. It imparts to the organization the family life, the spirit of comradeship founded on communication of ideas and work. But it must be remembered that it is not ready-made or self-induced. The spirit must be slowly and patiently built up, extending from individual to individual, from group to group, until, in the larger sphere of the entire ambit of Catholic Action, the many manifestations of the same spirit find their amalgam in the glorious unity of an already triumphant yet ever-fighting Church on earth.

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CHAPTER III

A SOCIETY'S FRAMEWORK

"A GOOD beginning," it is said, "is half the battle." Perhaps the most important characteristic of the Catholic Actionist is to know how to initiate the Apostolate. The success of every movement depends on the foundations that are laid. In the beginning, especially, great clarity of vision is needed. Before any attempt is made, those who take the initiative must understand clearly the nature and purpose and necessary conditions of Catholic Action. Then the particular work in which they intend to engage must be clearly studied. Beginnings are generally small, both as regards material formation and initial purpose.

Generally speaking, Catholic Action begins in a small way. The Almighty, who gives His inspiration to His workers, would seem to present at first opportunities for little services. He offers us just the beginnings of service. If we are faithful in small things, He will ask us to undertake greater tasks on His behalf. Should we refuse smaller services, the nobler ones will not be presented to us. For this reason we must be ready to seize on what

seem lowlier opportunities. The door to Catholic Action opens slowly. Fidelity in the little things will widen that opening. Many are disappointed when they experience the slowness with which they must proceed. They are asked to help at first, not to take charge. They feel that their dignity will not suffer them to give the little help in the way that is first demanded of them. Self prevents them from taking advantage of the opportunity contained in the little service. The Catholic worker, if he is in earnest, must not be ashamed to avail himself of the smallest opening. The tiny fissure will, if he works upon it, open out into a wide field of Catholic Action. "Beginnings may be very small, but, provided we really do begin, Divine Grace will soon cause them to grow and prosper" (Pius X, "Il Fermo Proposito").

It may be that some Catholic layman, more zealous and more thoughtful than his fellows, feels urged to do something in his parish. Certain wants may be manifest where he lives—and where are they not manifest? Some simply bewail conditions or burst out into loud condemnation, but there the matter rests. They forget that an evident time has come for work and for organization. Let those enlightened at least begin. Should Catholic organizations be already in existence which meet the case they should be approached and the matter placed before them. To establish an organization already approved

makes the task much lighter as a ready-made constitution is to hand.

Let the leader gather around him a few kindred spirits. Let them discuss the matter as thoroughly as possible and draw up some scheme of organization. It may be that a society already in existence in the country, such, for instance, as the Catholic Young Men's Society or a Society of St. Vincent de Paul, will meet the situation. It would be foolish to begin new and unknown organizations when those already in existence will suit the purpose. Priestly guidance will be of great assistance in this early stage.

Having thoroughly prepared a scheme, the next step is to approach the Parish Priest, lay the plans before him and seek his approval. As already stated, on him, under the Bishop of the Diocese, rests a grave responsibility. Nothing can be done without his approval. The Parish Priest or, perhaps, the Bishop may appoint one of his curates or other priest to take up the work. He will be blessed if his parish possesses some priest who has taste and training for social work. Of such priests the Holy Father says: "These priests must be the soul of associations, the propellers of energy and of apostolic labours and representatives of the authority of the Bishops" (Pius XI, letter to Archbishop of Bogota, Colombia, May, 1934).

For the inauguration of the newly-formed Society

it is well to provide the greatest publicity possible. A call to arms of all Catholic parishioners should be issued. It would be well to inaugurate the association in the parish church, so that the fundamental spiritual and supernatural basis of Catholic Action may be stressed. The presence of the Bishop at such an inauguration would, it need hardly be said, add enormously to the prestige of the assembly. Should the new organization have a secondary and economic or social purpose, further public meetings could be held in the parish hall. At such meetings the business aspect of the organization could be discussed. This bringing of the movement within the sacred precincts of the Church and the associating of it with a religious atmosphere is in keeping with the practice of the ancient guilds, the spirit of which the Holy Father is so anxious to revive. It is certainly of the utmost importance that from the very beginning the essentially spiritual character of Catholic Action be vigorously emphasized.

Needless to say, a public meeting, be it ever so grandiose, does not constitute a society. A long and, at times, a weary way lies in front of the leaders. Only deeply earnest men and women will pull through. Much propaganda must be made, much ink must be spilt, much talking and instruction delivered, before the new idea is capable of capturing the popular mind. This must be persevered in to

the last. Members do not count in the beginning. They may prove a hindrance. The main object must be to form leaders. Every new member must be trained and firmly attached to the new organization with a clear idea of what is expected of him. This may take years, but years well spent.

Many organizations have boastfully counted their members and have pointed to a large membership as a sign of their thriving power of Catholic Action. This conclusion is not always warranted. A huge number of adherents without clear ideas as to the nature of the Catholic Association to which they belong adds to the confusion and may by unworthy action precipitate the new society into discreditable ways and give it an unsavoury reputation. Numbers are useful only when properly controlled and disciplined to the last man. They are helpful only when their membership brings the guarantee that they will act ever in and not without the governing body—in perfect consonance with the law and spirit of the body to which they belong.

On the leaders and the committee lies the responsibility of bringing the organization to a healthy condition. This can only be done by spreading out the interest. To accustom the new members to take part in active work from the beginning is the best guarantee of their persevering. Here leadership will be required. A one-man organization is useless. There must be organized teamwork from

the beginning. Back-benchers are not required in organizations of Catholic Action. The committee must necessarily keep in close touch with all that is done in the name of the organization, but this does not mean it should fear to distribute the work through sub-committees and create workers.

Catholic Action means work, and all work must be organized. In the great industries of the world this organization has become a fine art. Cut and dried methods of production and of teamwork have been proposed, and in many cases actually adopted, as a system by certain employers. The excellence of these methods consists in the right apportioning of different tasks connected with the industry under wise directorship. Without direction and authority industries give but little or no output. There arises an overlapping of production in one department and a wastage of energy. Methodic administration means success. Leaders in Catholic Action would do well to study some of the many books on modern business organization, some of which are eminently adapted also to the successful running of an organization of Catholic Action.

The directive forces of committees in a society are of supreme importance. Their duty is principally to organize willing members in the great undertaking. The directors, who succumb to the temptation of their office to do, or try to do, everything themselves are failures as administrators and organ-

izers. In the beginning, indeed, they have to show the way, but as time goes on and as the ideal takes more and more hold on the members of the organization, their duty, whilst they themselves take a just share in the work, will consist in the control, direction and encouragement of, rather than actual engagement in, the society's activity. The moment they find amongst the members one who is able to undertake a certain part of the work they should hand the care of it wholly or in part over to him. A society that depends for its activity on the action of one or a few of its members cannot last for any length of time. The rôle of the directing committee is, then, of supreme importance. A committee should take up their duties in a spirit of fidelity to the Society. Their office is a sacred trust bestowed on them by the general body. The dignity and honour of election sometimes proves a tonic and keeps some faithful for a while, but the constant drudgery of work is the acid test. Once an officer fails in this test his period of usefulness is at an end. His resignation alone saves the situation.

“In order that an association may be carried on with unity of purpose and harmony of action, its administration and government must be firm and wise” (Leo XIII, “*Rerum Novarum*”). This double quality of firmness and wisdom is very essential to every Catholic Association in the full bloom of its activity as well as in its inception. In

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drawing up the laws of the new institution care must be taken to establish a wise constitution. Not the number of rules but the safeguarding of essentials is the ideal of government. Wisdom of legislators must take all circumstances of life into consideration. There is no use in overtaxing human strength or of cramping the free movement of the members. But once a certain ruling is calmly regarded as essential to the constitution there must be firmness. Too many constitutions are rendered useless because their high-sounding conditions for continuance of membership are never put into effect. There is very little use, for instance, in stating that attendance at a prescribed number of meetings is a necessary condition of membership, if the rule is not enforced. Such weakness brings the entire constitution into disrepute.

“The offices and charges of the society should be apportioned for the good of the society itself, and in such mode that difference in degree or standing should not interfere with unanimity and goodwill. It is most important that office bearers be appointed with prudence and discretion” (Leo XIII, “*Rerum Novarum*”). Election of officers generally lies within the power of the members. The wise wielding of this power is the supreme test of all organizations. Pope Leo’s words should be carefully borne in mind. No other consideration but that of the good of the Society should be allowed

to sway the voting power. The holding of office is an honour but it is something more. It is a terrible responsibility. On the officers depends the conduct of the Society. They must be tried men and known to have the requisite qualities of leadership. There is no use in voting for personal friends, not to mention less worthy practices of a still more selfish character. In time of election the consideration of the Society's good must be paramount.

Experience in organization smoothenes many a rough path. As time goes on many difficulties will be experienced. Unsuspected situations will arise. All these things will bring development. Provided the Spirit of Association prevails, the power of the organization to meet all difficulties will not be wanting. Goodwill and earnestness will launch the new apostles out into the deep. When the storm arises they will have confidence in the Master, Whose cause they serve. He may seem to be asleep. Yet He ever watches over the efforts of those who generously undertake His cause. If the work be for Him, He will make it prosper in His own time.

CHAPTER IV

CENTRALIZATION OF EFFORT

BECAUSE of the breadth of the field of Catholic Action, it is natural that organizations should be multiplied. The interests of Catholic Action are as wide as life itself. Since every profession, every class, every activity, needs to be permeated with Christian principles, organized action finds many different outlets. This multiplication of associations need not be a weakness. Here there are two extremes to be avoided. There are some who would restrain the number of organizations within very narrow limits. Some, on the other hand, would spread a network of heterogeneous societies all over the country.

Pope Pius X having considered Catholic Action "in its more important part, namely, the solution of the social question," states: "This does not exclude the favouring and promotion of other works of divers kinds and varied organizations, all equally aiming at this or that particular good of society and of the people, and at the revival of Christian civilization under various special aspects."

The Holy Father allows a liberty of choice as regards the selection of associations. "These works arise, for the most part, from the zeal of individuals. . . . So long as their object is praiseworthy, their Christian principles firm, and the means they use are just, so much are they to be praised and encouraged in every way. A certain freedom of organization should be allowed them, for it is not possible, when many persons meet together, that all should be modelled on the same pattern or follow one single direction" ("Il Fermo Proposito"). Pope Pius XI lays down the rule to guide the rise of new organizations: "They must be increased and developed as the circumstances of men and things require" ("Utri Arcano Dei").

The present Holy Father also reminds us that in this question "account must be taken of the duties and circumstances which are met in individual and social life by the diversity of governments and classes" (Address to the Consistory, May 23rd, 1923). Provided the purpose of a new organization meets a real necessity, not as yet undertaken by any other organization, there is nothing to fear from the growing number. Danger would arise if organizations were allowed to crop up here and there under new names to accomplish what older organizations had already satisfactorily in hand. Such a multiplication would but serve to dissipate Catholic energy. There are to be found selfish

individuals who, in their ambition for limelight, will tolerate only the organizations they have themselves created. Such interference should not be allowed. It weakens the whole Catholic front. Those who are so tempted should remember the advice of the Holy Father to Catholic workers: "Let them seek not themselves and the things that are their own, but the things that are Jesus Christ's. Let them not urge their own ideas with undue persistence, but be ready to abandon them, however good, should the greater common good require it" (Pius XI, "Quadragesimo Anno").

The most important condition governing the development of Catholic associations is that their organization be in keeping with the nature of the action they undertake. Catholic Action is hierarchical. So also must be its organization. Since it is entirely and completely an instrument in the hands of the hierarchy, its organizations, be they ever so diverse and multiplied, must be grouped around the body of the Bishops of the Church. That is the centre around which all Catholic organizations revolve. There must be liberty in, never independence of, that body. Only through the fulfilment of that condition will multiplicity of organizations achieve greater efficiency through variety of purpose and at the same time unity of action. There must be a common, directive and centralizing force. "The action of Catholics, of whatever sort, will

proceed with a larger effectiveness if all their associations, while the rights of each remain secure, have one and the same directing and moving force at their head " (Leo XIII, " Graves de Com ").

This centralizing force may first be considered in associations which are units of a greater organization and which bear the same name. In order to create a successful movement of a widespread and efficiently organized character, it is of vital importance to aim from the very beginning at providing a strong governing power not alone in each particular section of the society, but in the entire body as well.

This wise provision gives a double advantage to an organization. It maintains the essential purpose and spirit of the society intact, whilst at the same time it allows full freedom of action to each section in its own sphere. Centralization, though important, must always be of such a nature as to allow sufficient scope for a healthy expression of individuality on the part of the individual units.

Healthy organization requires a wise blending of centralization and decentralization. Excessive centralization would destroy initiative, whilst lack of it would place organizations at the mercy of irresponsible plagiarists who, under the same name, might create an association of a very different type from that originally contemplated and thus destroy social unity, which is essential for success.

The Constitution of the C.Y.M.S. of Ireland, as

approved in 1934 by the Irish Hierarchy gives a good example of efficient centralization. The branches are federated yet retain their local autonomy. "The association, being of a purely federative character, respects the autonomy of the affiliated branches." The purpose of the Federation is sufficiently wide to allow complete liberty of activity according to local necessity. Yet, especially through its conventions, there is provided a source of unity and of inspiration to secure general efficiency. The supreme governing body of this organization is the National Council, comprised of representatives from all affiliated branches. At the head of this body is the representative of the Irish Hierarchy—the Director-General. This body has power to legislate for the entire Society and directs the organization, especially in matters concerning Catholic Action. The work of the National Council is carried on by a National Executive Council (cf. C.Y.M.S. Constitution and Rules, issued by National Council, 1934).

The history of this Federation of the C.Y.M.S. of Ireland is itself proof of the efficacy of centralization. This very ancient society was founded by Dean O'Brien, of Limerick, in the year 1849, only twenty years after the passing of the Act of Emancipation. As might be expected, Ireland was hardly ready for such a movement as the Dean inaugurated. In England a strongly centralized society grew up

from the very beginning. Mons. Lyons sums up the situation in Ireland and shows the result of the newly formed Federation. "So needful and so worthy a Society spread rapidly in Great Britain, where it flourishes to-day. But in Ireland it wilted. Its real purpose forgotten, it often degenerated into groups of old fogeys devoted to cards and billiards, and the few surviving branches were hardly aware of each other's existence. But, thank God, in 1927, a few earnest men in Dublin re-organized the Society, wisely forming it into a federation. They held the first Catholic Social Week in Dublin in 1929, and another in 1930. To-day there are 31 affiliated branches. In 1930 the Federation received episcopal sanction, the revised constitution was approved by the Bishops in January last, and Monsignor Waters, Vicar-General of Dublin, was appointed Director-General. So this fine old veteran corps of Catholic Action is refitted for the fray" (cf. C.T.S. Conferences, 1934—Belfast, "Irish Catholic," July 14th, 1934).

The centralization visualized by the Holy Father is still wider than this federated grouping of branch organizations. It is not sufficient to ensure that Catholic Action Societies march under a centralized form of government within their own association. All organizations dedicated to the Apostolate need the general direction of a central body. They should revolve around a national centre which

should be in close touch with and depend entirely on the Hierarchy. "In the disposition of every activity of every human work undertaken in common, the necessity of a unique and central force, entrusted with legislative and disciplinary authority, is an indisputable truth. The more complex becomes life, the more evident becomes this truth, the more it triumphs. But the nobler is the ideal which is pursued, the more delicate and grave are the responsibilities, the more necessary becomes the bond of co-operation which is born of and upheld by unity of ideas and the agreements of parties and a programme. From this elementary principle and from our natural desire to apply it arises in Catholic Action—and it is one of its characteristics—intimate union with the ecclesiastical Hierarchy. We lay down as a model for Catholic Action the organization of the Church itself, in which in the different degrees of its hierarchy there necessarily and faithfully vibrates a unity of direction" ("Osservatore Romano," January 12th, 1929).

At the summit of each and every Catholic activity must preside this unitive and directive force in the form of some central organization. This body is, of course, composed of laymen specially chosen and appointed with full authority. Over this body presides the representative of the Hierarchy. Naturally much will depend on the choice of members

to form this central body. Let them be chosen slowly, not on the basis of their prominence, but on their reliability. It is ridiculous how certain types of notorieties are always called on to fill positions just because their name is well known. Public prominence does not always indicate efficient leadership. Quiet workers, but cultured and well-informed, level-headed yet determined, are far more likely to make a success of their work and win the respect and allegiance of the various organizations they are appointed to direct. Finally ornaments are not wanted. In a hurry to organize and to form a committee numbers and names often satisfy us. We feel we have done our work when we summarily ask some one or other, "Will you act on this committee." We force people to accept positions who have no idea of what they are asked to do nor any real intention of doing it. Hence spring badly attended meetings and half-hearted committees.

Since the business of this central body is to direct the nation's Catholic activity, its first duty is to enlighten itself on the exigencies of the country in the light of the requirements of the teachings of the Church. If it is to be a National Council it must possess the gift of counsel. This gift comes through the Holy Spirit, on Whom, as we have seen, Catholic Action so completely depends, and through one's own intense study and enlightened thought.

This Council must sort out the problems that confront Catholic life—the schools, the press, public morality, the cinema, Communist propaganda, etc. Naturally in this work the very societies it ultimately directs can furnish much information. Problems such as these are general and of interest to all forms of Catholic Action and are not confined to any organization. Meetings from time to time of the leaders of the different approved organizations will be an invaluable means of keeping in touch with the Catholic situation throughout the country. Naturally all information received should be indexed and a complete documentation carefully preserved.

Uniform direction is the purpose of this National Council. Thus it forms the very heart of the Catholic movement, sending its energetic impulse through the great down even to the smallest organizations, so that all experience its beneficent influence. "All Catholic Action acts, should act, but under the direction of the central Federation. One cannot conceive this co-operation of the Apostolate without that which establishes its glory, its merit and its good" (Pius XI, Discourse to the Italian Catholic Action, May 16th, 1926). Such a central body should direct not dominate or absorb. In the joint Pastoral with which the English Hierarchy founded its National Board of Catholic Action this characteristic is clearly emphasized. "It does not contemplate interfering in any way

with the autonomy and distinctive characteristics of these various religious organizations, each of which has its own particular objective and its own special appeal. It aims rather at co-ordination of effort and concerted action on the part of all Catholic societies towards a common end. Not infrequently it has happened that Catholic societies doing similar work are ignorant of each other's activities when a pooling of their efforts would undoubtedly have increased their general efficiency" (Whit Sunday, 1934. *Catholic Times*, May 25th, 1934).

Direction presupposes vigilance over the different organizations. The Statutes of the Italian National Council, founded at the express wish of the Holy Father, clearly indicate this need of watchfulness and control. "The Central Committee is the directing and co-ordinating organ of all action. It examines general problems, studies their solution, gives directions to the organizations on which rest the responsibility of solving such problems. It controls the working of all institutions whose activities enter within the compass of Catholic Action. It watches over the co-ordination of all that activity with a view to obtaining the best results for the common purpose" (cf. "L'Associations Catholique de la Jeunesse Belge," ed. 1924, p. 275).

The necessity of this watchful control is apparent. Things have been done in the name of Catholic

Action which bring discredit on the movement. Declarations have been made utterly out of keeping with its spirit. On the Central Council rests the responsibility of removing any such misunderstandings. It must see each organization observes exactly the teaching of the Holy See and the directions of the Hierarchy. It should restrain organizations from acting outside their proper sphere and from encroaching on the domain of other organizations. Naturally this vigilance must be authoritative. The Central Council must have power to vindicate its direction. Under the control of the Bishops and guided by their directions it must be the supreme court in matters concerning Catholic Action.

Pope Pius X having called for the establishment of a central body in Italy, shows how a like body is required in all other countries also. "It meets, in fact, a want felt alike in almost every country; the simplicity of its constitution arises from the very nature of things which are everywhere equally to be found: it cannot be said to suit one nation rather than another, but it is suitable to all which have the same needs and dangers. Its eminently popular character causes it to be readily appreciated and accepted; it does not interfere with or obstruct any other institution, but rather gives them strength and cohesion" ("Il Fermo Proposito").

Pope Pius XI lays down in detail the means to

be adopted by a Central Council for the promoting, directing and unifying of the forces of Catholic Action. "In the setting up and fitting out of this organic structure it is most expedient that in the individual dioceses as far as possible there should be found priests and small groups of lay persons who, well formed in doctrine, outstanding for their generosity and zeal, devoted to this Apostolic See and ready to serve their Pastors, as active leaders of Catholic Action, will frequently visit the parishes of their diocese or of another diocese if called upon at the command of the Bishops, with a view to bringing the brightest possible light to bear on the glory and benefits of Catholic Action, to rightly inform the leaders of so great a work, without whom there is not given to associations the power to live or flourish, and finally to dispose and compose all the forces and initiatives, so that each society will pursue what is proper to itself without in any way injuring others" (Letter to Cardinal Leme de Silviera Cintra, Archbishop of Rio Janeiro, October 27th, 1935).

A danger which is found in Ireland, yet is not peculiar to it, arises from too great an individualism. We resent control and hate any check on our liberty of action. Societies remain too closed up in themselves and fail to view problems nationally. They just seek their own little glory without any reference to other organizations, whose very existence they

sometimes seem even to resent. A pooling of effort is looked upon with suspicion, lest it should dim the little lustre of their own achievement. Catholic societies that refuse to accept willingly the unifying control of a central body make manifest their failure to grasp the most elementary idea of Catholic Action. Small-mindedness and selfishness have no part in work for the Church. All associations must look on themselves as part of the Church, which is one, and accept with willingness the effective direction of the central power. Organizations for particular social purposes, which work under the name of Catholic Action, though independent in what is purely economic and of temporal interest, are not free to refuse to the Church, under whose banner they work, that religious and social co-operation which is the business of Catholic Action. "This also must be again and again commended, namely, that associations, once formed, not alone live in happy concord but be linked together for one purpose, namely, parochial and diocesan sodalities, and the directing national council, so that all are suitably bound together and interwoven. As the members of the one body so are the cohorts of the unconquerable army. Not the dissipation of forces, but their fusion; not a chance concourse of effort, but a well-ordered conspiring for the common good" (Pius XI, *ibid.*).

The presence of a national central body does not

exclude other centralizing bodies. The directive force which is its purpose will reach all the different societies more thoroughly through local centralizing bodies of parochial and diocesan character. Article 17 of the Italian Catholic Action Statutes states : "The Central Committee exercises its power of direction and of co-ordination in the different dioceses through the intermediary of diocesan committees and in the parishes through the intermediary of parochial councils, in complete dependence to the most reverend Ordinaries as regards the entire diocese and to the parish priests in each parish " (cf. " A.C.J.B.," p. 220).

The parish presents a very natural field as a unit of organization. Each parish, or in a city the group of parishes, has its own particular needs, and its organized groups to meet such needs. There are sodalities, altar societies, etc., from the purely religious side ; St. Vincent de Paul, benefit societies from the charitable side ; Youth movements, such as the C.Y.M.S., Boy Scout and Girl Guide organizations, study circles, library committees ; possibly workers' unions, agricultural and co-operative societies and various other associations. Representatives of all these organizations should meet from time to time under the ægis of a central parochial committee to discuss the difficulties and dangers in the parish and adopt suitable means according to the purpose of the different organiza-

tions to meet them. Such a central body provides a tower of strength to the Parish Priest and Curates. According as plans develop new Catholic Action Societies will be formed to meet new needs. In a parish organized in such a manner there is very little fear of inroads from Communism or paganism. For there exists a strong group of Catholics ever on the alert and ready to act at a moment's call.

From well-organized parishes there springs a well-organized diocese. A central diocesan body brings the impulse and direction of the National Council to within easy reach of the parochial organizations. It is but natural that local problems are best solved by local organizations. The present tendency to absorb the power of local governments does not seem to be happy in its results and should be avoided by organizers of Catholic Action. It is, moreover, quite contrary to the desire of the Holy Father. The Diocesan Council should draw up a general scheme of work. In this it is normally inspired by the National Council as well as by its own experience of men and matters. Its general duties are summed up under five heads in the Statutes of the Italian Catholic Action. Its first duty is to have a charter of establishment from a competent authority both for itself and for the various societies of which it is composed. It should then co-ordinate the activity of the different groups, preventing any duplication or conflict.

Whilst guarding the autonomy of the groups, it should yet attach them securely to the central body. To such a body it pertains to prepare the ground-work for questions of interest to the different organizations, and to study the problems which call for collective activity of all groups. Not the least of its tasks is to see that the diocesan organizations observe both the letter and spirit of the decisions of the Central or National Council. Finally it should promote the establishment of parochial councils and assist them in their work.

It will readily be seen that this work of centralizing Catholic effort demands a long preparation. In some countries Catholic Action movements can only be said to have begun. Centralization of anything presupposes a certain latitude of organizations already in existence. The idea of Catholic Action has captivated many minds before we are ready for centralization. Yet it is well to keep it in view. If the workers at present engaged in the spreading of the Apostolate through our various organizations bear it in mind as an essential factor in future development, and make the followers conversant with such an idea, its establishment will not be long delayed.

CHAPTER V

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE interests of the Church are world-wide interests. She is not for any one people, but equally for all nations. Her mission, her unique desire, is to group the whole human race in a higher supra-national and spiritual family in Christ. Nationhood is a sacred thing, but not the most sacred thing. "The secular power is subject to the spiritual as the body is subject to the soul" (St. Thomas, IIa-IIae, Q. 60, art. 6, ad 3). By the very nature of their religion Catholics are international in their outlook. Their ideal of life and of the purpose of Creation is not narrowed by any merely national religion or Church. Their faith teaches them intense love of country. But that love, though limitless in itself—since it springs from a debt which, as St. Thomas explains, can never be fully repaid—must ever respect the higher unity of the entire race in God, the universality of men's brotherhood in Christ. "At the present day the most adequate expression of the profound aspirations of the human being against death is to be found not

only in the word *Nationalism*, but also and in the first place *Universalism*. There is no authentic and truly supra-national universalism other than Catholicism. The minds of men can only readjust themselves to the present needs of the world by adjusting themselves to the Catholic absolute" (Maritain, "The Things that are not Cæsar's," p. 69).

Catholic Action, though it principally benefit the particular nation in which it wields its influence, must not lose sight of this international claim of the Church of Christ. There must be harmony of thought and conduct not alone amongst people of the same country, but amongst all nations. Such harmony is the only guarantee of genuine peace, the only basis on which to build not a pretended but a permanent League of Nations. This foundation of sound international relations is not, unfortunately, accepted by those very people who vaunt their love of humanity and proclaim their spirit of fellowship. "Never perhaps was there more talking about the brotherhood of men than there is to-day; in fact, men do not hesitate to proclaim that striving after brotherhood is one of the greatest gifts of modern civilization, ignoring the teaching of the Gospel and setting aside the work of Christ and of His Church. But in reality never was there less brotherly activity amongst men than at the present moment. Race hatred has reached its climax; peoples are more divided by

jealousies than by frontiers ; within one and the same nation, within the same city, there rages the burning envy of class against class ; and amongst individuals it is self-love which is the supreme law overruling everything ” (Benedict XV, “ *Ad Beatissimi*,” Nov. 1st, 1914).

Those who take part in Catholic Action must not fail to appreciate this broader outlook. The more Catholic a nation becomes in the spirit of its laws and constitution, the wider spreads its influence, the more helpful and sympathetic become its dealings with other nations. In the present-day development of international relations, even one thoroughly Catholic nation can do much to assist in the creation of permanent peace and goodwill. “ There is no human institution which can impose on all peoples any code of common laws, adapted to the present times, such as was possessed in the Middle Ages by that true Society of nations which was the community of Christian peoples. . . . But there is a Divine institution able to safeguard the sanctity of the law of nations, an institution both belonging to and at the same time superior to all nations, endowed with supreme authority and venerable for the perfection of its teaching office : the Church of Christ, the one institution capable of undertaking so heavy a charge, from its divine mandate, from its own nature and constitution, from the greatness of its traditions and the majesty it has held through-

out the centuries ; which was not overcome by the storms of war, but rather marvellously strengthened " (Pius XI, " Ubi Arcano ").

The sowing of this germ of world-wide fraternity is indeed an object well worthy of all Catholic workers. One of the first endeavours of Catholic leaders should be to form their adherents internationally, bringing their thoughts to bear on the universal claim of the Church, accustoming them to consider the Catholic question as it is embodied in the desires of the Vicar of Christ, the common Father of the human race, forming in them a zeal for the cause of Christ in all lands and a goodwill to establish that fraternity which is born of their faith. By thoughts and ambitions such as these the world crisis will be presented to them in a new light ; it will evoke in them an imperative zeal to aid in so far as opportunity is offered them in the restoration of all things, of the whole universe, in Christ.

Public opinion is an enormous factor in the life of a nation. It is not less important in international life. Modern invention has brought the nations very close to one another. Modern conditions have established a power of publicity which, not so long ago, was hardly possible amongst villages of the same locality. In the difficulties that confront them all nations are interested in the latest reform, no matter how experimental. It is for the apostles of Catholic Action, by their insistence on Christian

principles, to show the world that future prosperity can only be found in a return to the teachings of Christ. Advantage must be taken of every situation to drive home this truth. Catholic workers must not be afraid. The time has come resolutely to apply theories to actual conditions. No small international influence is exercised by the fearless efforts of Catholic workers to Christianize their own national institutions. "Let your light shine before men that they may see your good works" is the command of the Divine Master Himself.

In this international aspect of Catholic Action, Ireland occupies a unique position now as in the past. In her greatest days of national culture and independence she proved herself a mighty builder of international and Christian civilization. Columbanus and a host of others linked up the nations. They were the international plenipotentiaries of Christ. Even to-day her international influence for Christianity is astounding. Though there are renegades, yet the mass of the Irish people who leave our shores bring with them their love of the home country and a fidelity to their Faith. If we but build our Nation on the traditions of its past greatness, if we teach our children and inspire our youth to have a just pride in the Catholic character of their Irish nationhood and in all that it stands for, we need not fear for our international influence. Our national spirit embodied in our emigrants or

in our official delegates to various international conferences strongly embedded at home, must react and be true to itself abroad. It will not be narrow, but generous, broadminded and even forgiving. It will offer insult to no nation ; it will be in peace with all. Building up its own civilization, its own native dignity, it will show the nations of the world what Christianity really means.

Apart from this general influence on other nations by the assertion of Christian principles at home and abroad, it should be remembered that there exist definite international Catholic organizations. These organizations have been the natural outcome of the common purposes of Catholic associations. Continental nations are by reason of their geographical situation very much in touch with one another. Their problems are very much akin. The inevitable geographical position of Ireland seems to render Catholics as a whole more or less indifferent to what takes place on the continent of Europe. Satisfied with a firm stand in the past on behalf of the Faith, our at times too confident sense of security prevents us from taking that larger view of international affairs as they appear to the eyes of the Church. Our position is entirely peculiar to ourselves. We have much to be thankful for. But we should not as a nation forget the universality of the Church. Does the Church need our help internationally as well as nationally ? Can our co-operation in

international organizations be of advantage to the cause of Christ and of humanity? Such questions should determine our attitude and activity rather than insular self-satisfaction or national smugness.

There are many types of Catholic international organizations. In a few there is already a certain interest on the part of small Irish groups such as the Pax Romana, the Catholic Union of International Studies, International Esperanto Associations. Recently attempts have been made to link up with the Catholic Women's International Organization. There is room for further development along these lines. Our International Eucharistic Congress of 1932 emphasized the need of more permanent relations with outside Catholic organizations. The vigour of many continental associations was made apparent by their coming amongst us. As a nation we suffered by the comparison. From the contacts that were then made a greater measure of international co-operation may be expected, or at least a broadening of our Catholic outlook. Our visitors on that occasion were exceedingly interested in Ireland as a Catholic country. Such a manifestation of Faith they universally admitted they had never witnessed. Yet our lack of Catholic organization was a complete surprise to them.

On the Continent there is a wide appreciation of the work of international Catholic Congresses. Leaders of Catholic thought realize that human

knowledge is not given in its fullness to any one group or nation, but to the common possession of all humanity. Open discussion, the sharing of ideas, the pooling of ideals more apparent in one people than in another—all that is a powerful aid in social reconstruction on Christian lines. Governments have felt this need in the starting of new industries. They have sent picked men to study conditions of the trade and manufacture in countries where such industry thrives. In the application of Christian principles to social affairs Catholic reformers will find like advantages from contacts with the Catholic life in other lands. Their chosen delegates and representatives will return to their organizations imbued with fresh ideas, conscious of new and better means to attain the desired purpose of Christianizing social conditions. A narrow insularism only impedes progress and narrows down the ambit of influence as well as the sources of true inspiration. In countries, which are still only at the beginnings of Catholic Action, progress in the campaign will be measured by a readiness to use the authentic methods, adopted in other countries with undoubted success. Conservatism does not help. Catholic Action in its modern aspect is something new. It is but natural that its methods are also new. But what is new is not essentially bad, more especially when experience in other countries has proved its Catholic usefulness.

CHAPTER VI

THE CHRISTIAN INTERNATIONAL

A DISCUSSION on Catholic organization, and particularly on the importance of international associations, would be incomplete without a reference to the work on behalf of the workers of the world by the International Federation of Christian Trade Unions. The social question forms the very centre of Catholic Action. The cause of the worker is at the very heart of Catholic activity. The repeated admonitions of the Holy Fathers found effect on the Continent. "The counsels of Leo XIII were reduced to practice" ("Quadragesimo Anno"). A Catholic trade union movement developed as a result. "It must be set to the credit of the Encyclical ('Rerum Novarum') that these unions of working men have everywhere so flourished that in our days, though unfortunately still inferior in number to the organizations of socialists and communists, they already muster an imposing body of wage-earners able to maintain successfully, both in national and international assemblies, the rights and legitimate demands of Catholic labourers and

to assert the saving principles on which Christian society is based" (*ibid.*). The various movements gradually coalesced and formed the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions.

This International is as yet almost entirely unknown to the Catholic workers of English speaking countries. We have grown accustomed to neutral unions. Is there any reason why unions for Catholic men and women should be neutral? They are barely tolerated in the eyes of the Church. "It belongs to the Bishops to permit Catholic working men to join these (neutral) unions, where they judge that circumstances render it necessary and there appears no danger for religion, observing, however, the rules and precautions recommended by our Predecessor of saintly memory, Pius X" (*ibid.*). One feels that it requires but a close and more widespread knowledge of the aims of the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions to convince Catholic workers of the immense advantage they would gain both spiritually and nationally from an alliance with the International and an acceptance of its ideals and principles. The want of success, for instance, of the Irish Labour movement to promote even the material welfare of its adherents must be in a large manner attributed to its failure to make any official use of Christian Social Philosophy. In no sphere is our insular disposition and our failure to have a Catholic

and international outlook more damping of Catholic activity than in this question of workers' unions. Let the efforts of our Catholic confrères inspire us in this matter of such grave importance. It is the only reason for entering into a detailed account of the history, aims and ideals of the International Confederation of Christian Trade Unions.

The origin of the Christian International must be found in the truth of Christian principles in their bearing on the social question. These truths are divine. They are God's revelation to man to guide him in his life, whether individual or social. On these truths must civilization necessarily rest. Their abandonment has precipitated the world "into a deadly mass of ills" (Pope Leo XIII). Against the extreme of selfish individualism, as represented by capitalism, there arose a no less dangerous extreme of socialism and communism. Between these twin evils that threaten the world there is yet another choice—the Justice and Charity of Christ. Both capitalism and communism are purely material. Christianity, whilst not neglecting what is of material concern, yet founds human life on the spiritual and teaches all men, whether employer or employee, to seek first in all things the Kingdom of God.

Faced with the pretence of communism to world conquest, and realizing that the much needed social reform can be attained by the application of Christian

principles, it was hardly surprising that Catholic leaders on the Continent should feel the need of international association. Catholic trade unions gradually arose throughout the Continent as a protective force against socialism. Pope Leo XIII, especially by his Encyclical "*Rerum Novarum*," blazed the trail towards Catholic social reform. His cry on behalf of a terribly depressed class was warmly taken up by Catholic leaders. Armed with this "*Magna Charta*" of labour, they fought for reform. Names such as Von Keller in Germany, Leo Bruggeman in Belgium, Maurice Maignon and the Marquis de Tour de Pin in France, recall the pioneers of these early endeavours. Already in 1884 an international union of Catholics was begun under the title of the "*Union of Fribourg*." International Catholic Congresses were held in Liege in 1886, 1887 and 1890. Definite attempts at founding an International entirely devoted to labour date from 1908, when delegates from the Christian trade unions met in Zurich. The period of the World War prevented a complete development. With the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, and especially with the setting up of the International Labour Bureau, with its important issues for the workers, a Christian International pledged to safeguard Christian interests became still more imperative. At a general Congress held at The Hague in 1920 the foundations of the new International were

definitely laid. At the Second General Congress, held in Innsbruck in June, 1922, the statutes of the International were adopted and a splendid document known as the "Economic World Programme" was issued to the world of Labour. This latter document should be in the hands of every Catholic worker. It would destroy for all time the idea that the rights of labour would suffer were the unions to become too Christian in their outlook.

The whole basis of the Christian International differs from that of the Socialist and Communist Internationals. Indeed, for Marx and his present-day disciples, whether in Amsterdam or in Moscow, international is a misnomer. Their aim is to destroy all nationality—to turn the world into one vast super-State. The Christian International seeks to establish no such narrow and sterile internationalism. For it all the countries represented by their delegates are and must remain distinct nationalities. This is a sane internationalism founded on a spirit of co-operation between all nations of equal standing and influence. States, like individuals, are distinct and have a God-given right to their independent existence. This right does not impede them in their spirit of helpfulness towards other nations. Communism, no less than the Imperialism which communists so frequently condemn, is anti-national as well as anti-Christian. Workers who join the Christian International need never fear

that their spirit of nationality will be interfered with.

Nor does this Christian International interfere with the internal arrangements of trade unions which are affiliated to it. It is a Federation of Unions, not a dictatorship thinly veiled, such as the Moscow International. "Being of a federative character, it respects the autonomy of the affiliated confederations." The only condition of affiliation is firm allegiance to Christian principles. The basis and purpose of the Federation is briefly summed up. "The Confederation adopts Christian principles as its basis. It consequently maintains that economic and social life implies the collaboration of all the children of the same race. It accordingly rejects, on the employers' side as well as on that of the workers, the doctrine of class hatred and of class struggle. The Confederation is of opinion that the present-day social and economic order is, in essential matters, in contradiction with Christian ideals. The aim of the Confederation is to bring about a marked change in society, in conformity with Christian principles and on the lines of organic and legal evolution. The purpose of the Confederation is, above all else, to defend by means of general co-operation the interests of workers and employers in the matter of economic and social conditions."

The leaders of the Christian International have

no misgivings as regards the true concept of human society. "Economic and social organization finds its purpose in the human person. But the human person is soul as well as body. This organization must therefore endeavour to provide for man the material well-being to which he legitimately aspires and must aid him to attain to that spiritual perfection to which he is bound. It ought to give him assurance not alone of the best possible use of the goods of earth and the forces of Nature, but also in that sphere of life which is proper to himself those other conditions of existence which are necessary to his moral development. This progress presupposes two things : firstly, work (both manual and mental) on the part of individuals ; and secondly, the subordination of particular interests to the general good. All the theories which consider the possession and enjoyment of material things as the sole object of human life, or at least as the sole purpose of society, are immersed in materialism and in contradiction with Christianity."

The position of the Christian International between the two extremes of liberalism and communism is also clear. "The Christian International rejects the unlimited individualism of economic liberalism which, by its excuse for liberty without any restraint, makes the stronger exploit the weaker members of society. Such a scheme can but lead to the impoverishment of the worker, to his en-

slavery and discontent. The Christian International likewise denounces the errors of socialism and communism. "The obedience which is due to the State must not be the destruction of one's personality nor the denial of liberty. The doctrine of class struggle, which is in opposition to the laws of justice and of fraternity, would enslave the whole of society to a part of its members. The Christian International purposes to protect in the best manner possible the liberties of each individual. The exercise of liberty must yet be limited by the exigencies of duty and the general good."

Naturally the International recognizes the right of the individual to acquire and possess property as his own, but this right is accompanied by grave obligations. These obligations are particularly urgent in the question of the employment of labour. "Labour is not a merchandise subject to the law of supply and demand. He who possesses the means of production and employs the worker cannot consider his personal profit as the exclusive rule of conduct. Conditions of labour must respect the moral law, human dignity, the worker's health. It must permit them to fulfil their duties towards God, the family, society, and to develop their own individuality. Christian principles applied to economic life demand the co-ordination of all forces, that is to say, of individuals, of classes, and of peoples in a spirit of loyalty, of solidarity, and of charity."

This collaboration is particularly urgent between employer and employee. The International has no narrow-minded ideas as regards the meaning of worker. There is an unfortunate idea in the minds of some that manual labour is alone worthy of the title of work, and that only those who so labour should be called workers. This notion is purposely spread abroad to destroy the dignity of human labour. "In the economic order work is the really active and vivifying agent. Capital in all its forms is itself the result of Nature and of human labour. It should then be but the auxiliary of the latter in the scheme of production. It is work which, by the aid of instruments and divers means, transforms raw material into products which are of advantage to the general economy. A sincere collaboration is essential between the different categories of persons who co-operate in production: owners of natural means of production (natural resources, factories, machines, money, etc.), the heads and directors of businesses, and finally the agents of actual production—the workers and employees. The managing of production is of its very nature an intellectual work, to which a special place must be reserved in the economic life. However, the interests of such management are at present so closely allied to the interests of those who furnish capital that business directors, even when they are not owners, must in general be considered as repre-

senting capital interests. It is between these two groups, capitalists and directors on the one hand, and the personnel which works under their direction on the other hand, that industrial organization should maintain a fertile collaboration, a technical collaboration entering into productive activity itself as far as the workers' skill permits and an association in the product of this activity in proportion as each one has contributed to obtain it. This collaboration can be realized in a very notable way through a system of shareholding for the workers or by any analogous form of participation."

The actual demands of the Christian International for the workers of the world are extensive and far-reaching. Reading them, even the most intemperate of labour leaders must be convinced that the Christian International has a programme worthy of his best endeavour, and that both employer and worker will find in it a basis of agreement and of healthy production. The rights which it claims are all based on the personality of the worker and the dignity of human labour. The nature and duration of work, its demands on human strength; the protection of the woman, especially when married; the moral as well as physical protection of the wage-earner; the wage itself; provision for sickness, old age, unemployment—these are but some of the many interests to which the International pledges itself to seek reform.

The claim of the International regarding wages is, as one would naturally expect, identical with the teaching of Pope Leo XIII and the present Holy Father. "The fixing of salary should by preference be through collective agreements according to the following principles : (1) Every adult worker has a right to a minimum salary which will permit him to provide for his maintenance in conformity with the demands of his human dignity ; to rear and provide for a family. In fixing salaries the cost of living should be taken into account. For large families, certain allowances should be provided from a special fund. (2) Over and above the minimum salary, the part played by the worker in production should correspond with the value of his share, in the form of work—in the value of the goods produced ; a wage should remunerate the application ; the skill and the special capability of the worker should indemnify him for the danger and risks which are inherent in his profession."

The education of the worker is yet another matter with which the official world programme is concerned. Firstly, as regards technical education : "It considers such education as an indispensable condition of the moral, domestic and social progress of the working class." But the worker's education does not stop at merely technical formation. There is need also of a spiritual uplift : "An essential condition of the social amelioration of the working

classes is a profound study of social, economic and political problems, a consciousness of the dignity of labour, a notion of duty, and a sense of responsibility towards Society, the State, and the family.”

In this matter of moral education there opens an immense field of activity for Catholic leaders of Labour. Most of our trouble arises from ignorance of Catholic principles, of the true nature of the State and of individual responsibility of both worker and employee in regard to the common good. It is high time that the inspiration of the Christian International formed a basis of activity. Foremost on the platform of Irish Labour, for instance, should be this endeavour to instil Christian social truth into the minds of the Irish workers, and so to make them conscious of their dignity, their duties and their rights. This will never be accomplished as long as Labour leaders remain neutral in their allegiance and unsteady in their adherence to Christian principles.

With a membership numbering close on three million, and representing the combined strength of the Catholic Trade Union Federations of thirteen nations of the continent, it may be well said that the Christian International holds a unique place in present-day international relations. It has already done great service to the cause of the workers. Its confederated unions throughout the continent have inspired confidence by their stand for justice.

Many a reform refused on account of communist and socialist excess has been achieved through the evident reasonableness of Christian demands. Its position in the International Labour Bureau is now recognized, and the Christian Confederation has powerfully aided in the drawing up of international legislation for the good of the workers of the world, which have been sent to all nations for ratification.



PART VII

SOWING THE GOOD SEED
(WAYS AND MEANS OF CATHOLIC
ACTION)



CHAPTER I

PEACEFUL PENETRATION

THE Holy Fathers have more than once emphasized the need of action. The grand theories of Catholic Action, be they ever so attractive, are of very little use unless they are put into practice. This actualizing of Catholic principles must depend on the energy with which the apostle evangelizes the world. But the very manner of this campaign of evangelization must be in keeping with the truth to be inculcated, as well as with the mission which has been divinely entrusted. Catholic Action is founded in Christ ; in Him also we must find in their proper perspective the ways and means of conducting it.

The Gospel provides abundant evidence of the Divine Master's mind. His method of evangelization is summed up in His own words : " Behold," He said to His Apostles, " I send you as sheep among the wolves." Such a mission would seem, perhaps, devoid of all practical sense. Yet, though everything would seem to be against the possibility of success, the Apostles bring with them an assurance of fruitfulness in their apostolate. They need not fear the wolves. " Let not your heart be

troubled. . . . I have chosen you and have appointed you that you should go and should bring forth fruit ; and your fruit should remain ” (St. John xiv, 1 ; xv, 16). Christianity is an undying thing ; it grips the hearts of men. It is persecuted, but its persecution is the source of new life and of ever greater progress. It does not depend on material help. Its conquest is not by the sword, but by the power of the word. That word is not a mere human word—it is the Eternal Word of the ever-living God, spoken first by the divine lips of the God-Man to men, and continuing on earth through the Church which He founded.

St. John Chrysostom’s commentary throws light on the methods of the apostolate as appointed by Christ. His words are peculiarly apt in these days and should help to determine our own manner of behaviour in the lay-apostolate. “ When the Lord had removed all solicitude from the hearts of his apostles and had strengthened them by the evidence of His signs, when, moreover, by freeing them from all care of temporal things, He had, as it were, steeled and hardened them, then only did He foretell unto them the trials that were to come. The reason of this was that they might be familiar with His power to know the future ; secondly, that no one could think that such grave evils in the world were the result of any weakness on the part of the Divine Master ; and thirdly, that those who were destined

to be the victims of such evils should not be perturbed by their suddenness, or by unpreparedness for their coming. Finally He sends them without worldly goods, clothed with one tunic, without shoes, without staff, without scrip and without purse, in order that they might understand that this was a new kind of warfare and an unusual mode of giving battle. His instructions did not end here. Going in this guise, they must yet further show the meekness of sheep, though they must go to the wolves ; nor is it alone to the wolves but into their very midst. He does not command them merely to have the meekness of sheep : they must possess in addition the simplicity of doves. In this way, He says, shall I most powerfully show forth my strength, when the wolves will be overcome by the sheep. It was, beyond all doubt, a greater and more striking thing to transform the minds of their adversaries and to change their dispositions than to slay them, especially, since they (the Apostles) were but twelve and the whole universe was filled with wolves. Wherefore, let us blush for shame that, acting in so different a manner, we have rushed on our adversaries like wolves. For as long as we remain sheep we shall conquer. If we become wolves we shall be conquered, because the help of the Shepherd, who feeds His sheep but not wolves, will be wanting to us " (Homily 24, St. Math. ; cf. Brev. Rom., in Fest. S. Barnabæ, June 11th).

St. Chrysostom's words form a charter of Catholic Action. Wrong ideas in this respect have, unfortunately, been more than once in evidence. The wolfish spirit has sometimes revealed itself. At times even well-intentioned Catholics have shown how little they understand of the spirit of the Apostolate. We find this mistaken attitude particularly in the beginning. Would-be partakers in the Apostolate are all impatience, prior to their proper formation, to start doing something—it does not matter very much what. When some glaring case of attack on the Catholic faith has taken place they are eager to rush out and smite the enemies of Christ. They find it hard to understand the spiritual character of Catholic Action, and still harder to grasp the peaceful but powerful means it must adopt to fulfil its mission. Some have indeed both inculcated and resorted to violent means under the guise of Catholic Action, in a manner quite out of keeping with its spirit. Extreme provocation may perhaps serve as an excuse for such methods in the eyes of those who make use of them. But the end does not justify the means, and much damage can be done by such inconsiderate conduct to a very sacred cause.

The spirit of Christ, which inspires the hierarchical mission, must also inspire all its methods. The work is not Catholic unless it is carried out in Christian manner. The dignity of Catholic Action

can never be laid aside. Whatever procedure it is decided to adopt, the apostle must never be lacking in Charity. He must never treat others harshly or roughly ; for he must act in the name of Christ. His ambition must be, not to alienate souls still further by subversive methods, but rather to draw them to the sweet yoke of the Divine King. No matter how perverse are the enemies of Christ, no matter how hateful their methods, he may never descend to their level. In treating with them he must remember that they also have souls to save, and endeavour above all else to win them back. Whilst he must do all in his power to suppress crime and prevent the dissemination of error, even calling in the secular power, he must bear in mind that the purpose of such endeavour is to save souls, even the souls of those whose ways are so perverse.

It is evident that Catholic Action has nothing in common with physical force movements. It is far removed from that bellicose spirit which breaks through all barriers of even public law and takes the power of drastic action into its own hands. Such a course is both false and dangerous. Those whom false enthusiasm plunges into such like imprudences should be mindful of the words the Divine Master spoke to St. Peter, in a time of most terrible provocation : " He who taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." Christ does not want methods of that kind. The strength of His mission

has a far different source. It is spiritual not material. The Gospel has in it an inevitableness of action, the result of its inner persuasiveness, which is in itself constraining. It must be remembered that the power of peaceful penetration which Catholic principles possess does not come from human agencies alone. God's grace is the supreme force, and without that help all other means are in vain. "I have planted, Apollo watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. iii, 6).

In the question of ways and means of the apostolate the layman as well as the priest must look for success, first and above all, to spiritual and supernatural aids. "Unless the Lord build the house, they labour in vain who build it." Prayer must be looked on as the supreme factor in Catholic Action. With the renewal of the apostolate there is needed also a profoundly spiritual renewal. One thing is certain: without the spiritual influence of the religious and even of the mystic life there can be no real Catholic Action. The Church does not need mere politicians or economists of renown. She needs saints. "Every soul," said Newman, "that raises itself raises the world." Our prayers, our Communion, our sacrifices will do more for society than many merely external activities. Catholic activity must be prayerful. Prayer without activity suffices. Activity without prayer is useless.

To this power of prayer the Holy Fathers re-

peatedly bid us to turn in our difficulties. In his encyclical on the Social Order, Pope Pius XI says that all our efforts must be supported "by assiduous and fervent prayers to God. For with the assistance of Divine Grace, the destiny of the human family lies in our hands" ("Quadragesimo Anno"). Pope Leo XIII declares, "Man's power of itself is not equal to the responsibility of so many and such varied duties. . . . Hence that universal condition and law of our life, which We said is a perpetual warfare, brings with it the necessity of prayer to God. . . . Whoever considers these things will not wonder at the efficacy of human prayer, seeming so great to St. John Chrysostom, that he thought it might be compared with the divine power. For, as God created all things by His word, so man by prayer obtains whatever he wills" ("Exeunte Jam Anno").

The type of prayer which may be said by the fervent apostle is used by the same Holy Pontiff who thus implores the Divine Pilot, Who sits unseen at the helm: "Thou seest, O Lord, how the winds have burst forth from every side, how the sea rages and the waves are lashed to fury. Command, we beseech Thee, who alone canst do so, the winds and the sea. Give back to mankind that tranquillity of order, that true peace which the world cannot give. By Thy grace and impulse let men be restored to proper order with piety towards

God, with justice and love towards their neighbour, with temperance in regard to themselves, and with reason controlling all their passions. Let Thy Kingdom come, let the duty of submitting to Thee and serving Thee be learnt by those who, far from Thee, seek truth and salvation with a purpose that is all in vain. In Thy laws justice and a father's gentleness are found, and Thou grantest to us, of Thy own goodwill, the power to keep Thy commandments. The life of man upon earth is a warfare, but Thou lookest down upon the struggle and helpest man to conquer; Thou raisest him that falls and crownest him that triumphs" (*ibid.*).

Relying on the power of God, to Whom suppliant hands are raised by the entire body of the faithful, the apostle is far from denying the efficacy of human means. Our methods must be both practical and positive. The apostle must get into touch with actual conditions of social life. There is very little use in merely condemning the anti-Christian propaganda of those who fight against Christ. The remedy which springs from Catholic principles is in our hands, but it must be applied. Refutation of error is most powerful through a practical demonstration of truth.

Speaking of methods of Catholic Action, Pope Pius X would have us avail of every lawful means to attain our purpose. "In order that Catholic Action may be effectual on all points, it is not enough that

it be adapted to actual social needs only ; it ought also to be invigorated by all the practical methods furnished at the present day by social and economic studies, by experience already gained elsewhere, by the condition of civil society, and even by the public life of the States. Otherwise there will be a risk of groping for a long time for new and hazardous things, while good and safe ones are ready to hand and have been well tried : or, again, there will be a danger of proposing institutions and methods suitable, perhaps, in former times, but not understood by people of the present day ; or finally there will be a danger of stopping half-way by not using, in the measure in which they are granted, these rights of citizenship which modern constitutions offer to all, and therefore, also to Catholics ” (“ *Il Fermo Proposito* ”).

The Holy Father would wish us to be thorough by not neglecting any opportunity of activity for the betterment of society. He would wish us to be modern in our methods, yet avoiding mere novelty. We may bring to our aid all the sure findings of modern scientific progress as well as of invention. The vast improvements in industrial production, sound theories of consumption, the new means of propaganda, may all be harnessed to serve the cause of Christ. In countries such as Ireland, where only beginnings have as yet been made, the pioneer must look for inspiration to the well-tried methods

which have proved so successful in other countries. Where there is a will there is found a way. Given enthusiasm, the intelligent worker in Catholic Action quickly discovers means of forwarding his cause. He will work patiently and according to plan. "With kindly fraternal charity will he be able to win hearts and fight the good and peaceful fight for Christ" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

CHAPTER II

INFLUENCING PUBLIC LIFE

CATHOLIC Action is a genuine warfare, though its methods are peaceful and its arms spiritual. It must, in a certain sense, learn tactics from more material combats. In every campaign there are what are known as strategic positions—that is to say, certain outposts which it is most important to man with an army of defence and attack. The occupation and fortification of such places is the first aim of good generalship. So also in the campaign of Catholic Action there are to be found certain strategic outposts whence both attack and defence are rendered more certain of success. Amongst the means of the apostolate the occupation of such positions by specially trained soldiers of Christ must be reckoned of primary importance. Good generalship in the campaign of Catholic Action demands also a watchfulness in the choice of areas of activity, in order that the installing of Catholic principles may be more easily and more quickly assured.

In every State there are specially potent spheres

of influence, whence not alone public opinion is formed, but social behaviour is shaped and national institutions receive definite tendencies. These spheres of influence are strategic by reason of their power for good or evil in shaping the social order. They vary indeed, both as regards the character of their formation and in the extent of their influence, but it is most important to ensure that their power be exercised for good by the maintenance within them of a strong Catholic force. Some of these spheres are national, others municipal or local, others purely professional, but they all need the benign power of Catholic thought for the good of society. "In view of the public good, which is principally moral and religious, Catholic Action will not exclude the participation of its adherents in public life in all its phases. On the contrary, it will render them better fitted for public office by a grave preparation of true holiness of life and the fulfilment of their Christian duties. Catholic Action, indeed, was born for the purpose of giving to the State its most honest and ablest officials" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Bertram).

By national spheres of influence is principally meant those institutions which have the responsibility of making laws for the common good of the State and of shaping the national policy. In these days of democratic government this duty is generally carried out by a group of elected representatives.

The power of such a body is obvious. On them depends the foundations of social justice, of peace, of international relations and as co-operators with the Church, even of religion itself. "When we speak of the reform of the social order," declares Pope Pius XI, "it is principally the State We have in mind. Not indeed that all salvation is to be hoped from its intervention, but because on account of 'individualism,' as We called it, things have come to such a pass" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

Grave issues are constantly presented for solution to this legislative assembly. They must act as judges as to what constitutes the material well-being of the people, not as an end in itself but, as St. Thomas points out, that men may live virtuously. From this body must decisions on question of justice be given and general social policy be determined. If those who are entrusted with such grave responsibility are not prepared to act in accordance with the natural law, the resulting legislation will but tend to augment the general disruption of the social order. For this reason it is the duty of enlightened Catholics to take their part in influencing the government of their country by the inculcation within the governing body of Christian principles. "We must needs add," says Pope Pius XI, "that to participate in political life is a duty of social charity from the fact that every citizen must, according to his capacity and opportunity, contribute to

the well-being of his own nation. When such participation is inspired by Christian principles much good will ensue, not only for the social, but also for the religious life of the people" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

Possibilities in this sphere of action in Ireland may inspire like activity in other countries. Our Irish legislative assembly is almost entirely Catholic. There is little danger of any definitely anti-Catholic legislation. Attempts were made to introduce certain very ugly questions, which were an insult to our Catholic intelligence. The reception they received at the time is likely to prevent any recurrence, but we can always expect to have certain so-called broad-minded people whose thirst for novelty atrophies intelligence. Our national opportunity is unique by reason of the Catholic composition of our Dáil. There is nothing to prevent us from forwarding gradually and by means of wise legislation the Christian concept of society. Big business men will raise their hands in horror, but individualism must not be allowed to stand in the way of stable and peaceful conditions. The balance of just distribution of property must be established and maintained at all cost. "I think," says Mr. Hilaire Belloc, "that in Ireland a great many men are determined, if they can, to re-establish property. They have already got a very good foundation for it in the peasantry, and I think they are extending

that ideal to industrial activity" (Address to U.C.D., *Irish Press*, October 24th, 1935). But there is very little use in extending the ownership of productive property, unless markets also are kept open and free from the control of capitalist interests. A Catholic Teactaire must look on every side of the question and not allow what he gives with one hand to be snapped away by the other at the dictate of big business people.

Political differences should, in so far as they exist, be kept rigidly within their own sphere. There is a wide field of agreement in questions of a Christian social order. Nothing connected with that order should be allowed to become the monopoly, pretended or otherwise, of any political party or made a cat's-paw for vote snatching. It should not be so difficult to attain union of all parties on these Christian issues. In this there should be no distinction between Catholic and Catholic. Naturally there must be leaders of Catholic thought within the Dáil before this can be established. Some, unfortunately just follow their party blindly and never pause to think any matter out for themselves. These are just voting automatons. But there are many elected to represent different parties or as independents who have a more Catholic perspective and a clearer vision of needs and dangers. It would be to the definite good of our national policy were members of the Dáil willing to attend per-

fectly non-political Catholic study circles in their own constituencies. Catholic organizations such as the now widespread C.Y.M.S. should be capable of providing a common and independent ground where members of all parties could meet without any prejudice to their merely political opinions. How quickly would not bitterness be replaced by agreement to differ on questions outside the scope of the Christian order. Attendance by Teactairi at such study circles would provide a necessary preparation for the introduction of social legislation in keeping with Catholic ideals, and at the same time, by keeping in touch with local needs, would provide the Dáil itself with a wider and better informed outlook on national issues. This would seem the best means of putting into practical effect the programme of Pope Pius XI, "The aim of social legislation must be the re-establishment of vocational groups" ("Quadragesimo Anno").

Another very important sphere of influence in the social order, and one which cannot be neglected by those engaged in Catholic Action, is that of local government. Pope Pius XI appeals for a wise liberty of administration for these local bodies. "The State should leave to these smaller groups the settlement of business of minor importance; it will thus carry out with greater freedom, power and success the tasks belonging to it, because it alone can effectively accomplish these, directing, watching,

stimulating and restraining as circumstances suggest or necessity demands" (*ibid.*). It is to be regretted that politics should have entered the domain of local administration, checking, as it does, the pursuit of good and cramping the efforts of the unbiassed in seeking social reform. The welfare of the city or the county lies in great measure in the hands of city or county councillors. They are elected or appointed to help the locality in its search for the common good. Self-aggrandisement, beyond the undoubted honour their position gives them, has no place in local administration.

A corrupt municipal or local body can do much harm to the common good. It can hold up the State in its endeavour to bring about a Christian social reform, either by refusing to enforce its measures locally or by not taking the fullest advantage of opportunities offered. In such cases the State has no choice but to take over the administration. On the other hand, given a body of honest and upright councillors, a fertile field of Catholic activity is opened up to local authority. Such a body can be the custodian, in a large measure, of the peace and harmony of the city or town, by checking what is base and encouraging what is good, by giving to the citizens an example of true and unselfish citizenship, and by voicing in the name of all the Catholic principles of a Catholic people. In this way life in the city on earth leads to life in the

“City not made by hands but eternal in Heaven.”

As for the State, so also for local bodies. Catholic organizations should endeavour by means of the formation they provide for their members to supply a continuity of well-trained councillors, if possible independent of party politics. They should, moreover, themselves study local needs and opportunities and bring forward suggestions to the local bodies. This ideal of Catholic watchfulness is not new even for Ireland. Dean O'Brien, who founded his Catholic Young Men Societies in 1849, proposed it as a power form of apostolate. “The interests of the Church—that is, the interests of the people—and the interests of God are concerned in the daily duty of almost every public man and public body in the island. Your corporations legislate upon your interests, your juries pronounce upon them, your poor law guardians decide upon them, your judges, courts and magistrates deliberate upon them, your administrators, executive officers and Parliament have them at their disposal, and the myriads of nameless, but not insignificant, dependants, whose mind reflected the prejudice and actions of their employers, are in some form or another the friends or enemies of the only means by which God ever intended that man should fulfil the end for which he was placed in this state of probation. Let us ask, then, can we overrate the importance of a great public opinion in favour of the Church?” (Constitution and Rules, C.Y.M.S., p. 37).

In the normal State many organizations are formed for special purposes, which are the natural expression of the different phases of its life. "As Nature induces those who dwell in close proximity to unite into municipalities, so those who practise the same trade or profession, economic or otherwise, combine into professional groups. These groups, in a true sense autonomous, are considered by many to be, if not essential to civil society, at least its natural and spontaneous development" (Pius XI, *ibid.*). These groups, organized "for purposes connected with their occupations," are not, it need hardly be said, to regard themselves as independent of the State. Though they organize to promote their own special interests, they are bound to respect the common good. Socialism and Communism would turn these groups, which are intended to promote the common good "in friendly harmony" into warring camps for the destruction of all civilized good for their own ends. "To this grave disorder, which is leading society to ruin, a remedy must evidently be applied as speedily as possible" (*ibid.*).

Through organizations such as these there is provided a unique opportunity of establishing a Christian social order. Hitherto they have been left too much outside the influence of the Church. The well-informed Catholic apostle has here a splendid field in which to work for the good of society in keeping with the very definite programme

which is outlined in the Papal Encyclicals. Here again Catholic organizations must train their members to take their due place, whether as employers or as employees, in the guiding of social and professional associations. It is through such groups in particular, that a way may yet be found to realize the grand ideal of government by vocational groups. We may well ask why any political party should claim such a Christian ideal as its own? The scheme of social order, proposed by Pope Pius XI, has nothing to do with Fascism or state dictatorship; it is simply practical and positive Christianity.

How this ideal may be attained and how far it is the business of Catholic Action is fully explained in the Encyclical of the Holy Pontiff. "We believe that to attain to this last-named lofty purpose for the true and permanent advantage of the commonwealth, there is needed before all else the blessing of God, and in the second place of the co-operation of all men of good will. We believe, moreover, as a necessary consequence, that the end intended will be more certainly attained the greater the contribution furnished by men of technical, commercial, and social competence and, more still, by Catholic principles and their application. We look for this contribution, not to Catholic Action (which has no intention of displaying any strictly syndical or political activities), but to Our sons, whom Catholic Action imbues with these principles and trains for

the apostolate under the guidance and direction of the Church—of the Church, we say, which in the above mentioned sphere, as in all others where moral questions are discussed and regulated, cannot forget or neglect its mandate as custodian and teacher, given it by God ” (*ibid.*). In a letter to Cardinal Cerejeira the same Holy Father makes clear the duty of Catholic Action in respect of these professional groups. “Catholic Action will, therefore, take care to promote such institutions where they do not now exist, and to assist them duly where they do exist, leaving to those institutions a distinct responsibility and authority in things that are purely technical and economic.”

CHAPTER III

THE LIVING WORD

“IT is supremely necessary that Catholic activity should seize the opportune moment, should advance courageously, should bring forward its own solution and urge recognition of it by means of a strong, active, intelligent and well-organized propaganda, so as to be able to confront directly the propaganda of the enemy” (Pius X, “Il Fermo Proposito”). The principal means of this propaganda must be by word of mouth, and it is well that we should consider the power, method and organization of this means of Catholic Action. A greater consciousness of their opportunity of achievement through the living word will help lay-apostles to put still more energy into their efforts.

Pope Leo XIII has a very striking pronouncement regarding the power of the living word: “Faith, as a virtue, is a great boon of divine grace and goodness; nevertheless, the objects themselves to which faith is to be applied are scarcely known in any other way than through hearing. ‘How shall they believe Him of Whom they have not

heard, and how shall they hear without a preacher? Faith then cometh by hearing.' Since then faith is necessary for salvation, it follows that it must be preached" ("Sapientiæ Christianæ"). There is, moreover, the clear evidence of the means used by Our Divine Lord during His public life. "From that time Jesus began to preach and to say" (Math. iv, 17). "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (*ibid.*, 23). In charging His apostles to continue His mission, He commanded them to continue also His methods: "Going, therefore, teach ye all nations" (Math. xxviii, 19).

The reason of this excellence of preaching in the propagation of the truth of the Gospel is pointed out by the same Holy Father. He says: "There is nothing so hurtful to Christian wisdom as that it should not be known, since it possesses, when loyally received, inherent power to drive away error" (*ibid.*). Bossuet's sermon on the Word of God is exceedingly beautiful. "The word of the Gospel, which is brought to us on God's behalf, is not a mere sound which melts into thin air, but an instrument of Grace. Exalt, if you so wish, the service of the word in human affairs; let it be, should you so desire, the interpreter of all councils, the mediator in all treaties, the guarantee of good faith, the bond in commercial dealings. In the ministry of religion it is still more necessary and

efficacious. . . . It is the word of Jesus Christ which regenerates the children of God ; it is the word which prepares the immortal repast on the Holy Altar . . . in the pulpit this word acts in a different way, but it is ever the organ of the Spirit of God " ("Sermons," Vol. IV, p. 187 ; Ed., Desclée, Paris, 1921).

The spoken word of truth has a distinct supernatural power. Given officially it is part of the great divine communication. From the bishops, who are preachers by directly divine appointment, this efficacy passes by delegation to the priests, who are sent in the name of authority. But even in the laity, who by virtue of episcopal mandate are called on to take part in Catholic Action for the installing of Christian principles, there must reside in some degree at least this same efficacy of the Divine word. For, as Pope Pius XI pointed out, the impulse in Catholic Action comes from the same source as the mandate (cf. letter to Cardinal Segura). Is not "the very particular grace" by which the apostle is called related in a special way to this efficacy of speech ? Moreover, since, as St. Thomas lays down, the sacramental character of Confirmation, conferring a participation in the Priesthood of Christ, constitutes the layman *ex officio* a defender of the faith, it is clear that God, who gives the office, confers also the grace required for its fulfilment. The truth the apostle speaks is the Word of God,

which he has himself received and which has a special supernatural virtue. Whilst, of course, laymen can never become preachers in the full ecclesiastical sense, yet they are definitely associated with the teaching Church. Their share in this work is made quite clear from the writings of Pope Leo XIII. "These (laymen)," he says, "so often as circumstances demand, may take upon themselves, not indeed the office of pastor, but the task of communicating to others what they have themselves received, becoming, as it were, living echoes of their masters in the faith" (*ibid.*).

It is hardly surprising that pride of place amongst the means of Catholic Action should be conceded to the living word. Catholics, convinced of their faith and its necessity in society, filled with zeal for its propagation, imbued moreover with the necessary virtues and acting under the impulse of the hierarchy's mandate, cannot fail to become living echoes of their masters, or to convince their hearers of the truth for which they stand. But it should be remembered in this respect that in Catholic Action this spoken word is backed by an organization and becomes the living expression of a group pledged to its accomplishment. The decisions and resolutions of an association of earnest men are to be regarded as powerful factors in the formation of healthy public opinion.

From the beginning the organizers of Catholic

Action must devote time to the preparation of the laity for this means of communicating Christian principles. Study circles and debating societies are best adapted to ensure readiness and facility of expression as well as the grasp of Catholic principles which must form the storehouse of oratorical endeavour. It is a mistake to imagine that success in public speaking is reserved to the privileged few. Some indeed possess a natural faculty. But even the unlettered and ignorant have surprised us at times by the power they have manifested even in a few untutored but earnest sentences. What Cicero styled "the convinced and enthusiastic soul," will find a way to bring eloquence of speech to the service of its cause. When the cause of Christ is concerned, it should not be difficult to obtain that earnestness, which is the first essential of the spoken word if it is to be living and actual.

Orators may be born, but the vast majority of them are made by their own efforts. Ornate language, or high-sounding words, or carefully-rounded phrases, please the ear, but by themselves are of little use in convincing one's hearers of the truth. Let those who can use such means. "It is necessary to instruct," says Cicero; "it is pleasant to please, but the triumph of eloquence is to move and persuade the will" (*De Oratore*, 21). To attain to this ideal, practice and healthy ambition to improve will be the best auxiliaries. The dignity

of the apostolate of Catholic Action has been emphasized. Whilst simplicity of expression will aid it in its task, the commonplace or vulgar will but serve to lower its standard. The lay apostle must never forget in Whose Name he speaks. It is not the orator or his personal ambitions that matter ; it is the cause which he serves. He must be able to say with St. Paul, " We preach not ourselves but Jesus Christ our Lord " (cf. 2 Epist. to Corinth. iv, 5).

But how and under what conditions is the lay apostle permitted to exercise this appeal on behalf of truth ? The only answer to such a query is that he must use it in every possible way and wherever opportunity occurs. He can use it in private conversations as well as before crowded audiences, in the factory or in the office as well as in public halls. The enemies of the faith excel in availing of opportunities. Any audience, willing or unwilling, provides a field for their activity. In the factory, in the fields, in offices, in public conveyances they draw their companions into conversation and strive to imbue them with communist propaganda. The influence of these conversations cannot easily be measured. It is the root of what is known as the " cell " system. Such a danger can only be encountered by a similar earnestness on the part of Catholics. Many are prevented from using this powerful means of propagating truth

from fear or shame ; but when the cause of Christ and His Church is in question nothing should deter the zealous Catholic from so great an apostolate. It is easy to start a conversation. An article in the morning paper, some item of news, some fresh development in the economic or political field, can provoke discussion. Results will not be wanting. In many cases, it will be found that those who have been led astray by error listen more readily to the layman than to the priest, whom they suspect of professionalism.

Catholic Action is, however, an organized action, promoted by a group. Utilized by this group, the power of the living word can become an organized expression through certain recognized means of propaganda. In Ireland, as elsewhere, we are not destitute of such means of creating Catholic public opinion. For many years the Catholic Truth Society, the Catholic Young Men's Society and other kindred institutions have focused public attention on Catholic thought. Though the subjects of discussion have been necessarily wide and not confined to the social question, there can be no doubt about their efficacy. This movement must be developed both locally and nationally. Whilst allowing liberty to each organization to work on its own lines, an effort should be made, by means of some central organization, to give a certain unity of mind to the entire nation.

Congresses, under various guises and representative of different interests, have been a marked characteristic of Catholic Action on the Continent. Their importance has been frequently stressed by Supreme Pontiffs : “ In order to renew and increase in all Catholic undertakings the necessary enthusiasm,” says Pope Pius X, “ in order to give to their promoters and to their members an opportunity of seeing and becoming acquainted with each other, to draw ever more closely the bonds of brotherly love, to enkindle in one another a more burning zeal for efficient action, and to provide for the better establishment and spread of the same works a wonderful help will be found in the meeting from time to time, according to the rules given by the Holy See, of general or local congresses of (Italian) Catholics ; and they ought to be a solemn manifestation of Catholic Faith and a common festival of harmony and peace ” (“ Il Fermo Proposito ”).

“ In order, however, to ensure that in time priests, religious of both sexes and the laity may become ever better fitted for Catholic Action, we regard it as most helpful that frequent gatherings or congresses should be held—now for a day, now for a week as is the custom in other places—for the purpose of education and to implore the divine assistance not alone on the part of the entire nation, but of the diocese or parish, so that those who come together may by pious exercises and meditation on

divine things as well as by discourses and lectures accommodated to the time and local custom and delivered by those fully competent to deal with social questions and with what belongs to Catholic Action, be filled with zeal for the apostolate and thoroughly grounded on the genuine doctrines of the Church" (Pius XI, letter to Cardinal Leme de Silviera Cintra, Archbishop of Rio Janeiro, October 27th, 1935).

The congressional idea, outlined by the Holy Father, received a remarkable development through the growth of what are commonly known on the Continent as Social Weeks. Such weeks are now widely recognized as one of the most powerful institutions for the propaganda of Catholic principles and for their actual influence on the social and family life of the people. The main idea of the social week is to dedicate an entire week to the practical study of social problems. Generally one particular aspect of the social question is dealt with each year, now in one part of the country, now in another, but always on a nationally organized basis. The best and most practical minds of the nation, both priestly and secular, are brought together to discuss in public session, as well as in private sub-committees, every detail possible of the question at issue. No social week closes without practical conclusions and resolutions.

To France goes the honour of beginning this very

powerful means of propaganda. The first Catholic Social Week was held at Lyons in 1906. With the exception of the years of the War, it has since been an annual function, with ever-increasing success. Two years after its inauguration in France it was taken up warmly and with similar success in Holland, and the following year in Spain. Within another few years, it had a remarkable development in Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Germany and Belgium. Strangers to the movement, who have been privileged to attend any of these social weeks are struck particularly by the unity of mind, the readiness to make sacrifice of personal opinions for the sake of higher interests, as well as the enthusiasm that prevails at all the assemblies. The most significant proof of the value of those assemblies lies in the printed reports. The series of reports, for instance, of the French Catholic Social Weeks is a monument to the intelligence and the earnestness of the Catholics of France, who are engaged in so difficult a struggle for the faith. To-day these volumes form by themselves quite an ample library for the Catholic Social student.

Mr. Henry Sommerville thus sums up the influence of the "Semaines Sociales" of France. "Started in 1906, the pre-war Semaines hardly got as many as five hundred auditors, Bishops were rarely seen, the Social Catholics were looked upon with mistrust and were often criticized very harshly

by the highly placed clergy. Now the Social Catholics are held up as examples for other Catholics to follow, and it is nothing remarkable for as many as a score of Bishops to attend a *semaine sociale*. It is recalled with pride that the social legislation of France has been borrowed so largely, without acknowledgment, from the Social Catholics. It is customary in France for laws to be called by the name of their chief legislative promoter. There are laws bearing the name of Millerand, Boncour and other Socialists and ex-Socialists which should really be called after De Mun or Lemire. The Social Catholics and Christian Democrats have, it is said, assisted at all the best social laws, but have baptized none. . . . The new prestige of the Social Catholics is an indication of the tendency to unity amongst French Catholics generally on social questions, a tendency encouraged by Papal leadership since the 'Rerum Novarum' ("The Catholic Social Movement," p. 147).

Apart from the Catholic Truth Society Weeks, efforts to create the congressional idea in social thought have been made also by other organizations. The C.Y.M.S. Federation of Ireland held public congresses for the better part of a week in 1928 and 1929. The week-end movement inaugurated by the Catholic Farmers' Organization—the *Muintear na Tíre*—is in the best traditions of Catholic Action on the Continent. No small success has been attained

by these efforts. But it is clear that much has yet to be done to give a national character to our Congresses. For the moment we must be content to use all the opportunities at hand. Public lectures, conventions, congresses of particular organizations, propaganda by study circles will prepare the way. Wider expressions, more national manifestations, will automatically develop from the growing consciousness on the part of our Irish people of the issues which are involved.

CHAPTER IV

POWER OF THE PRESS

BECAUSE of its more intimate and personal character, pride of place in the propagation of ideas is justly attributed to the power of the spoken word. But there are certain aspects of the written word which make its influence of even greater importance. No one will deny the far-reaching and profound effect which is produced in human affairs by what is commonly known as the "Press." In Our Divine Lord's time books were a rarity and the choice possession of a few privileged persons. With the swift progress of printing the written word assumed a new importance. It has not of itself the convincing power of the living word, but its sphere of influence is exceedingly large by reason of its ease of circulation. It supplies a vast material which forms minds for good or evil. We live in the age of the printed word. It is a power in business, in politics, in the deciding of national questions, in every sphere of life in which public opinion is of importance.

The Written word includes a large variety of

Press productions. It includes large tomes as well as the penny pamphlet, the expensively illustrated magazine as well as the printed sheet. With every variety of the printed word Catholic Action has a very vital connection. We might in this chapter speak of the apostolate through the medium of the novel, of plays, of poetry, of historical research or of scientific discovery. Grand and important work can be done for the Church by all these means. Not everyone, however, has the ability or the opportunity to undertake such tasks. We may leave such work to specialists. There is another and more popular aspect of the written word of wider appeal to those engaged in Catholic Action, and which opens up a large field of activity both in regard to actual production and subsequent circulation. We must discuss what is generally known as "The Apostolate of the Press."

The public mind is formed not so much by long and learned disquisitions as by the short but frequent doses of the periodical press. One penny brings sheets of printed paper into the hands of both rich and poor. For many people this form of the written word is their sole mental pabulum. Were we completely satisfied with the sources of modern journalism there would be no need for Catholic Apostles to enter into the arena of the printed word. Unfortunately, Liberalism, which perverted man's idea of liberty, continues its trail of destruction through

the Press. The modern Press maintains that it is above all moral criticism. The newspaper has become simply a big business concern. For the Liberalist business is business and run solely for the profit of the company. Make it sell; for on circulation will depend its advertising power, and consequently its financial success: that is the law of modern journalism. This of itself, were the moral law and the teaching of Christianity preserved, would not condemn the newspaper business. But the seeking of popularity too frequently means pandering to what is vicious. Editors may remain indifferent to good or bad provided they please their reading public. So dangerous has this unconcern for moral issues become that even un-Christian governments have at times been compelled by direct legislation to check the perverting of the public mind. Not all journals are, of course, equally unprincipled. On the whole we have little to complain of in regard to our native journals. But our shores are open to oversea productions which have more than once offended the Catholic taste of our Irish people. Articles appear, particularly on Sunday newspapers, which are in complete opposition to Christian teaching. Besides daily and weekly journals thousands of cheaper publications for young and old in one way or another pervert the true ideal of human life.

To the danger of this indifference of the modern

newspaper industry there is added a still greater menace by the many frankly propagandist journals which are ranged in open battle against Christianity. These are mostly weekly publications. From the point of view of literature they are of a low standard, but the vehemence of their denunciations is bound to capture the warped minds of some unformed individuals. Generally speaking, the editors of such productions are quite unscrupulous and gauge with care how much exactly their readers are likely to stand in the matter of abuse. Attacks on the Church are sometimes veiled, sometimes open, as seems to fit the occasion and opportunity of further perversion. Legitimate grievances, which would otherwise claim the support of every decent-minded citizen, are turned into occasions of vile abuse, not with a view of obtaining an honest settlement but of fomenting discontent and increasing bitterness. Their object is to work on human passions in order to augment social disorder. Ireland has known a strange galaxy of misdirected talent of this kind.

Apostles of Catholic Action should clearly know what is at issue in this question of the Press. They must show first of all how ridiculous and subversive of all order is the liberalist idea that the same protection should be given by responsible governments to error as to truth. They must endeavour to convince those very governments that their vaunted love of liberty is but the prelude to the destruction

of the State and of themselves. Speaking of this so-called liberty of the Press, Pope Leo says, "There can be no such right as this, if it is not used in moderation, and if it pass beyond the bounds of all true liberty. For right is a moral power, which it is absurd to suppose that Nature has accorded indifferently to truth and falsehood, to justice and injustice. . . . Lying opinions, than which no mental plague is greater, and vices which corrupt the heart and moral life, should be diligently repressed by public authority, lest they insidiously work the ruin of the State. The excesses of an unbridled intellect, which unfailingly end in the oppression of the untutored multitude, are no less rightly controlled by the authority of the law than are injuries inflicted on the weak. And this all the more surely because by far the greater part of the community is either unable, or able only with great difficulty, to escape from the illusions and deceitful subtleties, especially such as flatter the passions. If unbridled licence of writing be granted to all, nothing will remain sacred and inviolate; even the highest and truest mandates of Nature, justly held to be the common and noblest heritage of the human race, will not be spared" ("Libertas Præstantissimum").

It has become clearly necessary for Catholic Action to face the problem of the Press. The campaign should be twofold in its activity. First of all

in the light of Pope Leo's teaching, it should endeavour to set up a barrier to the dissemination of error through the printed word. We touch here on a matter affecting the entire moral order, and not on the social question alone. Should representation to civil authority prove ineffectual, other means may be adopted after due consideration of the seriousness of the menace, always, however, within the law. The good effects of a boycott on un-Christian literature have already been experienced in Ireland. More use could be made of what the French Catholics called the "White List." News-agents, in Ireland at any rate, have no desire to take part in a campaign of dechristianization. But their thoughtlessness and love of profit too frequently lead them to become agents of an unscrupulous Press. Not so many years ago a very successful effort was made to check the sale of certain unseemly Sunday papers. Shopkeepers were asked to exhibit a sign in their windows to indicate their membership of the clean Press crusade and their agreement not to sell certain journals. Present laxity of some of our Catholic newsagents indicates the need of using some such method again. It is indeed strange how otherwise seemingly pious Catholics can salve their consciences when they sell what they must know will do harm. Some have been so alive to the iniquity of such sales, yet so tempted to make profit at all costs, that they provide a special secret place in

their shop for indecent or other types of evil literature. They should remember that profit-making or just willingness to oblige will not excuse them from sinful co-operation in evil.

Pope Pius XI provides us with a clear and authoritative direction in the matter of Catholic Press campaigns. His words must be quoted in full. "Another activity to which Catholic Action must devote itself with special care is the establishment and support of a good and sound Press, and particularly the daily Press, which, because it is more diffused, exercises a more powerful influence. By the 'good Press' We mean that which not alone contains nothing contrary to principles of Faith or the laws of morality, but which is the standard-bearer of such Christian principles and such Christian laws. It is not necessary to point out how great is the efficacy of such a good Press, since daily experience demonstrates it, just as it demonstrates on the other hand the evil which bad newspapers and journals disseminate amongst youth. The bad Press, more widely diffused than the good, verifies the words of Christ: 'For the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light' (Luke xvi, 8). Now to the evil Press must resolutely be opposed the good Press, applying the principle—*Contraria contrariis curantur*. We wish, then, that through Catholic Action the Catholic Press in your country should be strengthened and

multiplied as occasion demands, and above all that every Christian family should take a Catholic paper, which faithfully echoes the teachings of the Church and thereby becomes a valuable auxiliary to the Church's mission. For this purpose, in view of the resources which a well-edited paper demands—as well as to make it a strong and able opponent to the powerful 'evil Press,' We think there should be a union of forces, so that the generous resources of all the faithful should be concentrated into initiating a work of such general utility, sacrificing where necessary particular and regional interests, for the general good, and readily making sacrifices which a matter of such vital importance demands" (letter to Cardinal Cerejeira).

The Holy Father's words furnish us with a definite programme of activity. He has clearly stressed the importance of this aspect of Catholic Action. So important a work may not be neglected, since it forms a very important point in the Church's defence of truth. It is not merely that the children of iniquity are wiser in their generation than the children of light, but their destructive purpose is far more easily accomplished. Evil and error exercise a more potent influence over man's fallen nature than do truth and good. An evil Press will always be sure of support, but a good Press has a hard battle to fight. Instead of sailing in apparent comfort and ease down with the current, it must

struggle valiantly against it. To do this requires strong convictions and unlimited courage. The Catholic Apostle of the Press is born for combat, not for the Holy Places, but for something even more important and more lasting—Truth Eternal. Pope Pius X once touchingly blessed a Catholic journalist's fountain pen, asserting at the same time that there was not to-day a finer mission than that of journalism. "I bless," the Holy Pontiff declared, "the symbol of your office. My Predecessors blessed the swords and arms of their Christian warriors. I am glad to call down a blessing on the pen of a Christian journalist" (cf. Vuillermet, "*La Conquête des Hommes*," Letheilleux, p. 180).

A Catholic Press campaign is not to be merely negative, that is to say, confined to opposition to the bad Press. It must destroy the evil through a contrary good. Consequently the first business of this form of the apostolate must be to recruit valiant soldiers for this type of warfare. Some indeed have a natural talent for expressing themselves in writing. But the essential characteristic of our Catholic Action writers must be before all else clarity of ideas in their printed expression. Style is an ornament, excellent in itself, but useful in the apostolate only when it serves to make the truth more easily understood. Those who have natural talent have a special obligation to use their gift in the service of God. Too frequently the parable of

the talents is applicable to those whom education and natural faculties make writing an easy task. Some speedily bury their talent when there is question of their using it in the noblest of all causes. Far heavier, however, is the responsibility of those who decide to use their natural talents against that cause. Inordinate pride seems at times to accompany great literary ability. The life story of some of Ireland's sons and daughters makes a sad record of ingratitude to God. Man has, in a certain sense, a creative faculty in the expression of ideas, but art is never merely for art's sake. Like all human activities, it falls under the direction of the principles of the moral order.

It is principally to our study circles that we should look to provide us with Catholic writers. There the rudiments of composition of school days can be used and built up by practice into facility of writing. Students should be encouraged to write short essays for discussion in the circle. A thoughtful leader can correct these essays and prepare them for the Press. The fear of printer's ink thus gradually disappears and the student becomes a regular contributor. Once grown accustomed, this new opening for Catholic activity becomes quite fascinating. Since Priests are the ideal leaders of study circles, ability to help young writers should form part of their general preparation for their priestly mission. Unless they have acquired a taste for writing during

the years of their college formation prior to the priesthood, they are hardly likely to bother much about it in later years. Student magazines and periodicals, compiled entirely by students for the secular or regular priesthood, provide an ideal training ground for future priests. Many a priestly pen, which has made its mark in the world of ideas, would never have been taken in hand were it not for the training and encouragement received in student days. Leaders of Catholic organizations can give help also in this matter of encouraging young writers by offering prizes for essays on Catholic subjects. The C.Y.M.S. Federation of Ireland has given the lead in this matter by presenting a gold medal annually to their members.

Both writers and writing need to be organized. Once a number of willing workers has been provided, their work for the Catholic Press must not be left to chance. A National Catholic Press Association will serve to keep unity in endeavour. On the Continent nearly every region possesses its own Catholic paper. In Ireland the situation is quite different. Apart from a few weekly journals of extreme and anti-Catholic tendencies, our Irish Press differs mainly in politics. More than once there has been room for complaint at the spinelessness of one or other of our dailies in matters affecting the faith, but, on the whole, they present a medium for the expression of Catholic thought. Sufficient

use is not made of local and national papers because there are not yet a sufficient number of Catholic writers. A Catholic union of writers would help to maintain this contact with the Press. If it is not possible to provide writers of special Catholic articles in each local paper, the organization could at least use its influence to have copy made of noteworthy Catholic contributions.

The task of a Press propaganda section of Catholic Action organization should also be one of vigilance. Even the best of papers at times unwittingly publishes what is quite contrary to Catholic teaching. There are others that pour out falsehood. Organizations such as the C.Y.M.S., by appointing a special small group of members to keep watch, and when necessary to answer, are in a position to counteract the evil impressions created. Such replies, whether by way of protest or condemnation, should bear the stamp of dignity of the apostolate. Positive in character rather than negative, they should endeavour to make the light of truth shine out even when they attack error. If it is not possible to obtain publication for these replies in the journal which has offended, the widest possible use should be made of a less prejudiced press, and more particularly of the distinctly Catholic press.

Catholic writers have a very special obligation to support the distinctly Catholic press. Articles by the clergy in such journals are, of course, splendid,

but may carry with them, to some minds, the taint of professional bias. The priest's training is a very technical one, and the ordinary public, which is expected to read our Catholic press, is uninformed in technicalities. The well-educated layman has a better chance of popular appeal in his writings, not of course in any cheap sense, but by being in touch with the ordinary language of the people. This popularizing of the Church's social doctrine is the great need of the hour. Pontifical encyclicals, being official and solemn pronouncements for the entire world, are the guiding light of all social endeavour, but they need not alone application, but explanation. Editors of Catholic journals should encourage lay Catholic writers to come forward and give their views on the best way to apply Papal teaching, and in what national social conditions run counter to that official teaching. Naturally, different interests will have more or less pronounced views about details or even grievances to air. But difference of opinion within the Church's teaching, granted the good intention of the writers, can be a powerful help in striving for a Christian social order.

The Church seeks writers to propound her doctrine, but writers are of little use without readers. The words of Pope Pius XI should form a slogan of Press activity : " Every Christian family should take a Catholic paper." The Holy Father's

desire should be taken as a command by the head of every Christian household. Poverty should be dire indeed to become an obstacle to its fulfilment. A Catholic weekly costs but a penny or twopence. It cannot be said that the poorer classes of society are the most backward in this. A census of supporters of Catholic literature would reveal that those who possess more abundantly the goods of this world do not support such literature because of their over-attachment to material things. In houses in which the all-absorbing topic of life, of parents and children, is pleasure, in which the family life is sacrificed to the liberty of individualist enjoyment, in which there is consequently no seriousness or Catholic mentality, one is not likely to find any attraction for sound reading. Parents should give the lead in this. Fully alive to their duty of forming Christian citizens, they can awaken an interest in their children, from their early years, in subjects of Catholic interest and gradually induce a taste for more serious reading. By striving to fulfil their natural obligation of educating their offspring in this perfect way, they will help the cause mightily and provide for a continuity of families of readers for the good of society and of the Catholic press.

CHAPTER V

THE APOSTOLATE OF THE SCHOOLS

PIONEERS in the Apostolate experience no little difficulty in their endeavour to form organizations for Catholic purposes by reason of the material on which they have to work. Deaf ears are turned to appeals for help. It takes years for new ideas, especially of a spiritual nature, to awaken interest. It is exceedingly difficult to get a large number of grown people to appreciate the fundamental laws of the Apostolate, or to arouse in them any real interest. Even in dealing with already formed Catholic Associations, this unpreparedness on the part of the members is a big obstacle to progress. Members fail, even after repeated appeals, to understand the immense interests which are included under the word "Catholic." They are not always to be blamed; they have never been properly educated in this regard.

Experience of this kind makes it clear that, if we are to hope for a widespread campaign on behalf of Christian principles, we cannot afford to wait until minds are already formed, at least in the

negative sense of being more or less further unimpressionable. The foundation of the sound Catholic adult mind must be laid in the schools. There we have fresh young minds at our disposal. There we have youth ready to seize an ideal. There we have generosity, ready to give unselfish service, once the ideal is presented. The school provides the fairest and most fertile field in the work of the Apostolate. The apostolate of the schools brings a double consolation: that of knowing that one is accomplishing "an important task of Catholic Action," and of ensuring to the Church a continuity of apostles in the future.

Present-day education, unfortunately, tends too much to formalism. Like so many other things, it has suffered from the narrowness of an industrial age. There is too much of the mass-output character in modern formation of youth. Even in the question of Christian Doctrine there is a danger of rigidity of treatment. A catechism is merely learned by heart, formulas are repeated with little or no knowledge of their real meaning. It is here that the really apostolic teacher will find his opportunity of service for Catholic Action. He or she, whilst not neglecting what is to be committed to memory, will put the Catechism in its living setting in the Church of Christ. Under such guidance, the chapter on the Sacraments will not be just a chapter to be memorized by constant repetition, but a part

of the living doctrine of Christ concerning the sources of life of the members of His Mystic Body.

In their work in the schools teachers, whether lay or religious, may enter very fully into the service of Jesus Christ. Of course, members of Religious Orders dedicated to teaching are formed in the spirit of the Apostolate by their very constitution. They are vowed to the cause of Christ through the schools. Their consecration to this cause is personal and total. Under such guides the school becomes a really Christian institution. "What shall we say," says Pope Pius XI, "of the founders of so many social and charitable institutions, of the vast numbers of saintly educators, men and women, who have perpetuated and multiplied their life work by leaving after them prolific institutions of Christian education, in aid of families and for the inestimable advantage of nations" ("Divini Illius Magistri," December 31st, 1929). Religious and priestly educational establishments have here a glorious opportunity of serving the cause of Christ. But it should be remembered that, if preparation is necessary for the lay-apostle, it is still more imperative for those who would form apostles.

Since, however, in these pages our main concern is the apostolate of the laity, it is principally of the lay-teachers we must speak. Though not personally dedicated by vow to Christian education, yet the

lay teacher, just as much as the religious, has a very sacred task to perform. He works on the same material and for the same purpose. He should not, therefore, look on his calling merely as a means of livelihood, though it must very definitely be such. He is a member of a great profession, the noblest of all, perhaps, outside the priesthood and the religious life. It is true that modern education especially embraces a very wide range of subjects, of arts and sciences, of secular pursuits, yet it must never forget the one thing that is necessary. It can never be merely secular or neutral. To pretend to confine education to things of purely temporary interest is to destroy the very meaning of education. The training of youth has for its purpose the perfecting of future manhood and womanhood, not alone for time but eternity. It must ensure a succession of good citizens both for earth and for Heaven. "Truly Catholic teachers do not intend to separate the children either from the body of the nation or its spirit, but to educate them in a perfect manner, most conducive to the prosperity of the nation. Indeed, a good Catholic, precisely because of his Catholic principles, makes the better citizen, attached to his country and loyally submissive to constituted civil authority in every legitimate form of government. . . . The true Christian does not renounce the activities of this life, he does not stunt his natural faculties, but he develops and perfects them

by cò-ordinating them with the supernatural. He thus ennobles what is merely natural in life and secures for it new strength in the material and temporal order, no less than in the spiritual and eternal" ("Divini Illius Magistri," Pius XI, December 31st, 1929).

All praise is due to the grand body of our Irish teachers. To them as a body can one safely leave the formation of our future citizens. Betrayal by individual teachers of the cause the general body upholds as a sacred inheritance does not militate against the group. The Irish National Teachers' organization, forming one of the largest groups of Irish trade union associations, is bound to play a large part in the progress of the Irish nation. Were its purpose just to defend the rights of the teachers, there would be sufficient reason for its existence. But that is but a material purpose. From such an association one should expect a profoundly Christian inspiration to go forth to all its constituent members. Pride in their profession as formers of the nation's children should be sufficient guarantee of this being done. Nature, says St. Thomas, seeks not alone being but well-being. It is the business of the directors of the Teachers' Association so to shape their organization that it will serve the best possible interests of their members as teachers, and of the Christian and national instincts of our Catholic people. It is the duty of every member to see that

only those who are so minded will be given the responsibility of control.

In a previous chapter we have dealt with the Christian International and have condemned the idea of neutrality in such grave issues as now face the nation as a whole. What has been said suggests a new vista for our teachers' organization. Our lay teachers are workers in the very best sense. Their work cannot be measured in pounds sterling. By reason of its immense power for good it is spiritual rather than material and lies at the very heart of the nation. Open and fearless endeavour, officially sponsored by the organization, for Christian principles of education, as so clearly outlined by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on the "Education of Youth," would place the teachers of Ireland on a new footing, remove any anxiety about the future, and check once and for all the disruptive designs of those whom official uncertainty emboldens.

To our Irish teachers as a body may be applied the words of the Holy Father. To them also may be extended the invitation which his words contain. "It fills our souls with consolation and gratitude towards the Divine goodness to see, side by side with religious men and women engaged in teaching, such a number of excellent lay teachers who, for their greater spiritual advancement are often grouped in special sodalities and associations, which are worthy of praise and encouragement as most

excellent and powerful auxiliaries of Catholic Action. All these labour unselfishly with zeal and perseverance in what St. Gregory Nazianzen calls 'the art of arts and the science of sciences,' the direction and formation of youth" (*ibid.*, Pius XI).

The Holy Father's words in regard to grouping, for their greater spiritual advancement, in associations of Catholic Action, opens up a new vista for our Irish teachers. The I.N.T.O. is a trade union movement. It must retain that character. What was already said of Christian unions should remove any doubt in that respect. Apart from spiritual considerations, it is definitely the purpose of the organization to look after the temporal interests of its members. But this need not prevent its leaders from seeking higher things, because the higher things will not in any way interfere with temporal concerns; rather will they strengthen their claims to recognition. "Catholic Action cannot be regarded as a substitute for those economic and professional associations whose immediate purpose is to provide for the temporal interests of the various classes of people engaged in intellectual and manual activity. These societies must preserve their own autonomy and exclusive responsibility in their particular spheres" (Pius XI, letter to Archbishop of Bogota, 1934). Under the auspices of a definitely Christian union the teachers' organization would continue its work as heretofore for the material

advantage of its members, but side by side it would develop a definitely Catholic activity under priestly guidance. This essential part of the teacher's life should occupy the attention of the general body at annual conventions, whence still greater inspiration would be forthcoming.

We are in the happy position in this country to possess Catholic schools founded and maintained by the State as well as by private enterprise. We have not that fearful anomaly of the neutral school. There is consequently a unique opportunity of laying down, during the precious years of youthful formation, all that is required in a citizen of a Christian state. But in this it is imperative to have the hearty co-operation of our lay teachers with the priests, who are managers and "who must be the soul of associations, the propellers of energy and of apostolic labours" (*ibid.*). Under the inspiration of a central association of Catholic Action for teachers as an offshoot of the I.N.T.O. the future promotion of the apostolate would be assured.

Successive Pontiffs have stressed the need of looking to youth for apostles. Some juvenile movements are already in existence. The Legion of Mary has already wisely made provision for it through school sections, and teachers have been its promoters. This juvenile work should be taken up by other Catholic organizations. Its effect on

the young minds will be found remarkable. Apart from the fact that it will ensure a flow of sound material into the ranks of the Catholic apostolate, it will be found to benefit, in no small way, the young people themselves by giving their minds a definite orientation and creating a seriousness of outlook, and a consciousness of their own usefulness in the business of life, which will afterwards be proof against the vapid and empty ideas they will meet with in maturer years.

The teacher, lay as well as religious, has a splendid vocation—one which calls forth all his generosity and unselfishness. In many places they are already the backbone of local C.Y.M.S. and other organizations. Thus education gives them a power, their profession a position of honour. Why should not such organizations as the C.Y.M.S. bring teachers into their ranks and use their services, both within and without the schools, for the good of the apostolate. Many Catholic teachers are quite ready and willing, but “no one has hired them”—their services have not been sought. Their association has given no inspiration. Let the more thoughtful move. There is nothing to prevent them from forming a general association of Catholic Action of their own, allowing individual members to work through any organizations that may be available or be practicable. In the schools, apart from the ordinary Catechetical instruction,

they will find many an opportunity of instilling into the young minds the ideals which animate their own lives. In fact it is impossible to imagine a lay teacher who has the Catholic apostolate at heart not radiating around him some of that enthusiasm he himself feels. There is here presented a golden opportunity of a really divine service of enduring fruitfulness for time and eternity. The Catholic Church looks to her teachers.





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